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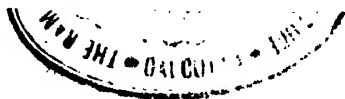
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# VEDA AND VEDANTA

BY

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and "Indo-Iranian Philology" (Bombay, 1929)*



ADVAITA ASHRAMA,  
MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

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E. P. Horowitz





## FOREWORD

Aryan and Nordic are terms used in a linguistic rather than racial sense. Aryan is briefer and neater than the clumsy compound Indo-European. East-Aryan is spoken in India and Iran; West-Aryan in Europe and America. Nordic, preferable to antiquated "Germanic" or outmoded "Teutonic," comprises English, German, Dutch and Scandinavian speech.

Diacritical marks and accents have been dropt; some names are clipt: munda, tittiri.' "Ch" and "s" are pronounced as in English; the two signs are furthermore used for the sounds "chh; chchh" (chandogya; pra-channa) and the palatal sibilant (sweta) respectively. "Jn" is spelt "gn" (agnani), thus attuning the Sanskrit vocable to its English relatives "ignorant" and "agnostic." The labial semi-vowel is either written v (veda) or w (sweta), in accordance with English phonology. Scientific spelling would bewilder the general reader for whom the book is meant; scholars will pardon and understand. Intricate words are etymologically explained.

"Veda and Vedanta" is a recast of lectures on Vedic religion and philosophy, delivered by the author at the University of Bombay.

Portland, Oregon,  
1937.





## I. THE ARYAN RACE

The Hindus and most European nations claim a common ancestry, and are popularly known as the Aryan race. Strictly speaking, no such race exists, owing to millenniums of cross-fertilization. From the beginning the Aryan stock has been replenished, time and again, with Ural-Altaic and Semitic blood. As far back as 1890 Huxley, with trenchant logic, shattered the Aryan fallacy; perhaps he had the racial crucible of Iberia or Iran in his richly stocked mind. Ever since her sanguinary wars with Turan, an old hereditary foe, but more particularly after the Arab conquest, mixed marriages diverted, often beyond recognition, the physical type and temperament of Persia which is sometimes called the cradle of Aryanism. Neither Sir Rustem, the saga-hero of the Shah-nameh, nor his father or son wedded Aryan maids. Even more striking is the ethnological hotchpotch of race-proud Spain, considering the ample Basque and Moorish ingredients in her blue blood; superabundant is the alien admixture to the sangre azul of the exclusive Gothic hidalgo. The Aryan race is a long exploded myth, a shadow without substance, but the impish will-o'-the-wisp periodically haunts the overheated brains of nationalistic propagandists. All the more real and dynamic is Aryan culture, embedded in the various Indo-European languages, both ancient and modern. Sans-

krit, the pristine and priestly tongue of India, is closely related to Greek and Latin, English and Russian. When the Aryans were still undivided, they spoke the same language, locally diversified, worshiped similar gods, had identical family institutions and social usages. Aryan ideals and manners of life, though considerably changed and modified, still prevail from the Himalays to the Pyrenees, and across the Atlantic to the Andes and Rocky Mountains. The homeland of the Aryans was neither India nor Europe, as formerly assumed, but for reasons to be given later the circumpolar belt. In the last Ice Age, Aryan cave-dwellers and bear-hunters were driven from the northern nest, no longer fit for human habitation. In the dawn of history, their nomadic and pastoral households roamed over the endless flats and steppes which extend between Asia and Europe, north of the Aral, Caspian and Black Seas. Each primitive home, often counting hundreds of members, was subject to the family father's patriarchal autocracy. In the genial spring-time, wanderlust would tempt the restless shepherd tribes; with kith and kin, herds and flocks, tents and ox carts, they trekked from pasture to pasture over the vast tracts of present Southern Russia. In course of time, quarrels arose over the finest grass-land; the brawling clans clashed, and angrily parted company. Geographical separation led to linguistic differentiation; the ever widening gap of speech, and split in dialects, assumed such gigantic proportions that now only a trained philologist can discern resemblances, say, between English and Russian

words. Distance affects diction. Mexican Spanish differs from the Castilian mother-tongue both in pronunciation and the use of words. New York English diverges from London speech. "Apartment" and "homely" convey the idea of room and domestic on the other side. In England they pronounce lieutenant and revolution; "fall" is called autumn, "elevator" lift, "sidewalk" pavement, and "editorial" leading article. Variation on a much larger scale is noticeable in the evolution of Aryan speech which broke up in Sanskrit and Greek, Latin and Celtic, Nordic and Slavic, just to mention the main representatives. "Father" which signifies food-giver differs phonetically from the classical pater, but radically and semasiologically the two vocables are one. Ten, possibly related to "toe" and Latin "digit" (finger), does not sound by any means like French dix, yet the two numerals have sprung from the same Aryan root-word. A New York girl has one sister married in Paris, and another in the Philippines. In spite of thousands of miles between them, there is a pronounced family likeness in the features and bearing of the three sisters; each reflects some of the parents' characteristics. In the same way Aryan sister-words re-echo the parental type. Two expressions, king and fire, may serve as an illustration. The Latin terms are rex and ignis; "regal" means kingly, and "ignite", to set on fire.

## II. COMPARATIVE LORE

The rex or chief directed tribal affairs. Cognate to rex, genitive regis, are regent, viceroy and Sanskrit raj. "Maharaj" denotes "great king" or kaiser; maha being akin to our words magnitude and majesty. Chieftains also functioned as tribal judges; the ancient status leaks out of the German noun rich-ter ("righter" of wrongs) i.e. judge. The "reich" is no longer subject to imperial jurisdiction, but veers toward military dictatorship.

Aryan clans, each led by a raj, cleared the jungle, and set up temporary fences against wild hordes and savage beasts. Such an enclosure was apt to develop to a strongfold or fortified "town"; German zaun (pronounce tsown) retains the sense of fence or hedge. Sometimes forest fires provided the weary migrants with a location for a new settlement; a conflagration saved the trouble of felling giant trees in virgin woods.

The living forest was flame-swept,  
The lambent red tongue crept and leapt,  
The wood's primeval soul was dead,  
On ashes rose a new homestead.

Ignis, Sanskrit agni or the agile element, signifies the scorching forest fire and its gentler sister, the cheerful blaze in the domestic hearth. The fire-devotees of Hindustan invoked Agni, the bright god; to their cir-

cumpolar ancestry he represented the aurora borealis. Ignis applies to celestial and terrestrial flames, but the Romans never made a god of that word. Luna gleams betwixt minor "fires" (ignes), the moon shines between lesser constellations, sings Horace; luna micat inter ignes minores. It seems a long way from the valleys of the Ganges and Tiber to the bonnie hillside of Scotland where Burns fondly dwelt on the sweetness of home life in the tender song:

The lispin infant prattlin on his knee,  
His thriftie wifie's smile, his clean hearth-stane,  
His wee bit ingle blinkin' bonnilie.

Ingle is fire; inglenook and ingleside mean fireside in the north of England. Ingle is the same word, only slightly clipt, as Latin ignis and Sanskrit agni, the agile or mobile flame.

Besides ingle and regent there are countless other occupants of that congested tenement, the English dictionary, testifying that the various Aryan or Indo-European languages have a common stock of words, from the most ordinary notions of everyday life such as fire to the sublimest flights of poetic fancy and profound speculation. Nebula, the cloud-mist in the sky, claims kinship to Russian nyebo and Sanskrit nabhas, both of which mean "sky"; nephos, a Greek cousin, denotes a "cloud". In late fall when Flora fades and dies, mother Niobe, the wintry cloud, sheds torrents of tears. Rain feels like ice, the shriveled vegetation is stone-cold. Niobe is weeping for her

children; father sky metamorphoses her to stone! In German sagalore the children of the mist are named nibelungs. They are pierced and scattered by young Sigfrid, the victorious sunshine in sacred spring; the grim winter-dragon keeps the radiant sun-maid, the northern aurora, imprisoned in cloud-castle until Sigfrid releases the sleeping beauty.

Aryan mythology and comparative philology unlock unrecorded secrets of prehistoric life. Legendary lore tentatively points to Arctic origins of the Aryan race. The Rig Veda, an early Sanskrit hymnal and panegyric of nature gods, the Odyssey, the Ring of the Nibelung, and the Arundel Saga, an old English maritime epic,—all four make riddling allusions to the northern light, jubilantly welcomed in the ancestral nest. Even in the infancy of the race, the aurora borealis was but a dim reminiscence from a long-vanished age, even as the story of the Flood reminded the Jews of geological cataclysms in the ice-flooded, far-away past. When glaciation rendered the polar regions uninhabitable, the Aryan hunters drifted southward, ultimately reaching Finnish swamps and Russian prairies. They roved and rambled as herdsmen and cattle breeders over the boundless Eurasian expanse, located north of the three inland lakes which, before the rising of Mount Caucasus, formed one mighty sheet of water. When the overcrowded pampas of the old world could no longer support the prolific households, they severed, each group developing its independent speech. The East-Aryans or Indo-Iranians occupied Persia, Kashmir

and the Indus valley. The West-Aryans were Europe-bound; the Greeks first, Romans and Celts next, Nordics and Slavs last. The Russians, cream and essence of Slavdom, hardly moved; they merely spread. Straggling Aryan bands that stayed behind in Pontic puszta and Caspian llanos are labeled Scythians by classical chroniclers, and Sakas by Indo-Iranian annalists.<sup>1</sup>

If you touch Aryanism in one vital spot, you feel its very life-force throbbing through every part. English fairy-tales and Irish romances mirror the gorgeous polytheism of Vedic nature poetry; Greek and German lore teach the same uncompromising ideals as Vedanta, the fearless transcendentalism of brahmin-priests.

Veda, early religion of Aryan herdsmen in India,  
And Vedanta divine, twin-soul of Plato and Kant:  
Bright gems of faith and wisdom, ye lie embedded  
in Sanskrit,  
Casket of loftiest thought, type of world-ruling  
tongues!

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1. The author's English Sagalore, not yet published, deals with the Arctic origin of the Nordic race.—Did life originate at the north pole? When the circumpolar zone became ice-capt, lower animal life was frozen to death, while massive mammals spread outward. The ancestry of primeval mammoths and men reaches far back into anterior geology. Ten thousand years ago when the last Ice Age ended, ponderous elephants, in search of prey, tramped through the wooded tracts and reedy pampas of New Mexico. American hunters trapped the prehistoric brutes into bogs, and slew them with stone spears. Beast and weapon have lain undisturbed for ten millenniums, buried beneath hard silt and several feet of sand. Only now they are being unearthed.



### III. HINDU SETTLEMENTS

After their departure from the Caspian steppes, the Indo-Iranians moved in a south-eastern direction from the Aral shores, along the broad river courses of the Amu and Sir Daria, as Oxus and Jaxartes are called now. The wanderers came to the Russian khanates of Balkh, Bokhara and Samarkand. After crossing the majestic mountain ranges of the Hindukush, the future Hindus proceeded through the rugged Afghan passes along the romantic Kabul valley; at all times that giant gateway lured treasure-seekers from the west. Alexander's Macedonian regiments followed the traditional trail of Vedic bullock carts. After another millennium, marauding Moslem bands marched along the same historic track to the Punjab or Five-River-Land. As rovers and raiders took up farming, the word "go" which means "cow" in Sanskrit burst into the wider sense of "soil."<sup>1</sup> When the Hindus first entered India, the Punjab was a happy hunting-ground of dark-skinned natives who offered stout resistance to the Aryan aggressor. But in the end

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1. Greek *ge* (earth) also had a more restricted sense, before "ge-orges" (workers on the land) settled down, and turned cow-pastures into plowland. German *gau* (shire, county) differs from the Indo-Greek vocables, and is related to Latin *humus* (ground, soil); *homo* (belonging to the soil; man) is the source-word of "humanity."

colored opposition was squashed. In the later Hindu polity the vanquished aliens, being serfs to Aryan masters, constituted the fourth and lowest caste. The three higher strata, priestly, military and agricultural, consisted of Aryan freemen. Social discriminations became so rigid, and family pride so unbearable that future reformers had to fight against class and race prejudice. Buddha constantly pointed out that all honest labor is precious; that menial service, done faithfully, and tilling the soil in the sweat of the brow, are occupations quite as honorable as ministering to the spiritual welfare of the people, or defending the assaulted land. "Salutary Instruction", a Sanskrit school book, affirms:

Clerics for their lore have honor,  
 Army men for bravery,  
 Farmers for their hard-earned treasure,  
 Servants for humility.

The caste system (varna) has outlived its uses, and is to a Free India a greater stumbling-block than imperial coercion.

#### IV. RIG VEDA

The oldest extant document of Hindu, maybe Aryan literature is the Veda, that is, "vision" or "wisdom"; religious lore is meant. Vedic poetry embodies the nature cult of the ancient pantheon. Its most vital portions are charms and chants, Atharva and Rig. The planetary bodies after which the seven days of the week are named vibrate in musical agreement like the seven strings of the lyre. The rhythm of the heptachord is repeated, on a cosmic scale, in the concord of the spheres. In Plato's Academy at Athens, special attention was given to the teaching of astronomy and music. Cosmic rhythm was first formulated in metrical and medical spells of Atharva magic, and subsequently intoned by sacrificial priests in the ringing metres and word-swing of the Rig Veda. These hymn-weavers of old applied the harmony of spheres to music, not in Hellenic perfection, but in the seed-form of incipient genius; they found the seven notes of the octave. The very word "gamut" (scale) is derived from Sanskrit grama which means, ag-gr-egate of tones. Vedic teachers picturesquely alluded to the second rung on the tone ladder as a "strong bull" (rishabha), to the fourth as "middle" (madhyama), to the next higher as fifth (panchama), and so on.\* Native musicians monosyllabized the seven long-winded words; notes 2, 4, 5, came to be known as "ri, ma, pa".

Still further developments of the musical scale have to be recorded.

Persia adopted the Indian gamut, but assigned "ma" and "pa" the next lower place in the rhythmic order. Making allowance for phonetic changes, "re, ma, fa" in the Persian scale refer to notes 2, 3 and 4. The Indo-Iranian notation migrated to the medieval Arabs who were not creative, but lavishly responded to every art and science. In the beginning of the eleventh century, a learned Benedictine, Brother Guido, matchless maestro of musical Arezzo, perfected the old eastern orchestration. With slight alterations the Sanskrit monosyllables are still in use, "ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si," being familiar terms in every music school throughout the world.

Rig contains about a thousand lyrics, arranged in ten cycles of song. These chants and carols, extolling deified nature, were sung in choral processions to the accompaniment of music. Priestly sages, treading a solemn measure, hymned the nature gods. Reigen-*weisheit*, as the Germans render "Rig Veda", combines dance and song, and also narrates vividly, in ballad fashion, how Aryan colonists subdued and civilized the colored man in the Punjab. The Rig hymnal blends war minstrelsy with nature mythology.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Sanskrit *ruch* or *rich*, changed to *rig* before the letter "v," expresses *rush* and *rhythm*, *glow* and *glee*, *dance* and *song*. Akin is *riksha*, the glossy grizzly or white polar bear.

## 1. Nature Worship

It was an anachronism of the past generation of etymologists to connect the ar-able soil with "Aryan", a name which was coined in nomadic times. Blond migrants from the north, a sturdy race of hunters and herdsmen, overran the Punjab in an anterior age. The victorious tribesmen were not wild cavemen, but utterly clannish, and in barter transactions suspicious of every outsider that entered their primitive settlement from the aranya (alien ground, woodland). Purchasers looked on a salesman from a clan, not their own, as an ari or alien, and as an enemy, until the steady growth of intertribal deals converted the alien pedlar to an Aryan or friend. "Loyal, noble, true", the usual rendering given to "Aryan", is a choice afterthought.<sup>1</sup> When the dominant joint-households began to settle, they selected as homesteads isolated spots in the wilderness, each family by itself, near a wood or stream or on the hillside. By slow degrees farming and villages sprung up in north-western India.

Pastoral life depends largely on the clemency or disfavor of nature. Sunshine and rainfall make the green grass grow, and provide fodder. A sudden hail-storm might decimate or destroy a whole herd; cattle,

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1. A parallel case of semasiology is Latin hos-tis (enemy) which recurs in English as gues-t; trade expanse changed hostility to hospitality.

Latin *pecus*, constituted nomadic wealth (*pecunia*). The early capitalists were cattle-dealers, and invested in live-stock; cattle and capital are both derived from "caput" (head of cattle). The ancient Punjab ranchmen eagerly watched and brooded over the fierce or friendly elements. Science recognizes immutable laws; religion reveres divine agencies operating in blind nature. Hidden forces strike primitive fancy with awe; elemental spirits, the germs of pagan gods, were propitiated with chant and sacrifice. Agni, fire, was idolized as the god of fire; the restless spirit presides over the cheerful blaze in the domestic hearth, and also over the deadly flash of lightning. Black monster clouds were transformed to spiteful cloud-monsters; thunder-growl to a growling thunderer; god Indra cleaves and scatters the foul giant brood in cloud-land. Equinoctial gales were personified as Maruts or lashing storm-gods; the dashing cavaliers attend on Indra in the fight of the raging elements. Rustling trees and running brooks, each star and flower, fell and wood, became the sacred shrine of an indwelling energy or deity. Nature's gay-tinted diversity was tenanted with elf, fairy, ghost and goblin. The roseate dawn was transfigured by the creative magic of Vedic poesy to a rosy-fingered maid, fair Ushas, the blushing daughter of father sky, while the sky itself, *varuna* in Sanskrit, received homage and honor as the benign father of mortals and immortals.

## 2. The Sungod

In this way the Aryan cult of light, both sun symbolism and fire religion, was instituted in India, the Veda being the sacred repository of that bright faith. The zodiacal aspects of the aurora borealis or arctic fire lived on in sagalore; their Vedic residue are the devas, celestial luminaries or beaming gods. The Hindu hierarchy rigidly fixed, and rigorously guarded, the sparkling gems of Rig lyrics which were orally transmitted from sire to son, generation after generation, in the priestly households of Aryan India. A snatch of a Vedic prayer, as old as the hills, invokes the sungod to kindle holy thoughts in his Aryan worshipers. His Sanskrit name is Savitar or stimulator; hence the short prayer to the sun is known as savitri. Unto this day devout Hindus make a daily practice of sitting cross-legged in the grey morning twilight on the shores of the sacred stream, as did their pious forebears thousands of years ago. Awaiting the advent of Aurora's delicate tints which will presently shoot tongues of flame across the illumined vault of heaven, they utter and mutter that holy mantra or Sanskrit spell:

Tat savitur vareniam  
 Bhargo devasya dhimahi  
 Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat!

Savitar's flame adorable—  
 Enkindle noble thoughts in us!  
 We meditate the sungod's light:

Another archaic name of the sun is Pushan. He provides herd and herdsman with fire and fodder, and makes the barley grow for broth and bread. Pushan guides migrant shepherds to grassy plains and the cool waterfront; he is timepiece and "pathfinder" (pathi-krit) of the pastoral age. "Lead us to fat pastures, god Pushan, bright guide on high! Keep prowling wolves from fleecy flocks, and highway robbers off our path!" sings an early Rig-weaver. In a later age Pushan developed to a pastor and pontiff; the good shepherd supplies his flock with food spiritual.

### 3. V a r u n a

Varuna, the Vedic sky-god, recurs as Uranus in Greek mythology. Hymns, dedicated to god Varuna, are the oldest and sublimest in the whole Vedic collection.

Wide-ruling Varuna fashioned creation ;  
He fixed the hills and set the golden herbage,  
By his command the crystal streams are running,  
The earth is his, and we are in his keeping.

It was a Vedic custom, after slaying and flaying deer or cattle, to spread the hides, and dry them in the warm sunshine. Deerskins were worn, and woven textures too. The very Vedic metaphors "to weave a poem" and "clouds woven in the sky" prove that



the art of weaving must have been known. A Vedic minstrel praises Varuna, the cosmic architect, in this fashion :

Varuna stretched the land out like an oxhide  
Which slaughtermen spread in the blazing  
sunshine.  
He wove gay silver streaks in the blue heavens,  
And flowery tints in mother earth's green  
vesture.

The following Varuna hymn breathes the lofty, yet lowly, spirit of the Hebrew psalms :

The path of ships across the sea,  
The soaring eagle's flight he knows,  
The course of every wind that blows,  
And all that was and is to be.

Thinking they are not overheard,  
Two plotters sit and scheme alone;  
Their fancied secrets all are known,  
Varun dwells in their midst, a third.

As mother-birds their pinions spread  
To guard from harm their cowering brood,  
Varuna! mighty, wise and good,  
Keep us from evil which we dread.

Or in a modern recast:

They reckon ill who leave me out.  
In fancy's flight I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn, the brahmin sings.

#### 4. I n d r a

Varuna was all very well as a pastoral god, but when the blond Aryans slaughtered and enslaved the dusky aliens, and settled in the blood-soaked Punjab, they needed a more martial deity to urge them on to deeds of valor and aggression. In the later portions of the Veda, god Varuna takes a backseat, the foremost place in the Hindu pantheon being assigned to irate Indra, the reckless rumbler in the storm-lashed sky. Indra became the national god of the stout Vedic heroes who smote the native blackskins, even as piercing thunderbolts shatter and scatter black monster-clouds.

Indra, our songs call loud to you,  
As lowing calves to their milch kine.  
Help us to smash the nigger-brood.

As Indra rushes into the fury of the warring elements, mad March winds or howling maruts, mid gleams of blinding lightning, drive his thundering car.

The banner which the maruts unfurl is a wheel on fire, suggesting the sun-flooded azure after the passing of the storm. The martial maruts are decked with glittering armor, and roar like yellow-maned lions or savage tusked in the wild, entangled jungle. Their golden armlets flash like the star-spangled night-sky. Sings a Vedic myth-weaver:

On flashing lightning-cars ye ride,  
And gleam in martial pomp and pride.  
Your heads a golden helmet crests,  
And glittering mail adorns your breast.

Vanaspatis or jungle lords, that is, venerable forest trees, fall crashing before the fierce assault of Indra's storm troopers who make the mountains rock and reel:

Vanaspati, vanaspati!  
You venerable jungle tree,  
The forest's leaf-crowned majesty!  
Dread maruts make the mountains rock,  
E'en you fall crashing at the shock.  
In such a fierce, destructive mood  
Wild elephants rush through the wood.

## 5. The Dragon Fight

Indra cleaves the murky giant clouds; he is the Vedic giant-killer. During winter the cloud-giant holds

the golden sunshine and the silver rain captive in his dingy cloud-castle, but in genial spring god Indra smashes the dungeon in the sky, releases the sleeping beauty, and pours salubrious showers on the parched and thirsty earth.

The powerful nature drama, comprising the annual warfare of the boisterous elements in spring and the defeat of wrinkled winter, became a fruitful source of the Indian theatre. A Vedic song narrates the overthrow of Vritra, the black winter goblin of beclouded skies,

The monster cloud whose magic powers  
Withheld from earth the genial showers,  
Whose demon-hosts from age to age  
Unceasing war with Indra wage,

Who, times unnumbered, crushed and slain,  
Fall after fall is born again,  
And evermore renews the strife  
In which again he forfeits life.

Every spring Indra triumphs over the hideous hell-hound, vapor-wrapt Vritra, even as the Nordic champion glories over the Nibelungs or nebular mists of sunless Arctis. The narrative of the dragon fight ends thus:

And bound by demon-spell no more,  
The clouds pour forth their liquid store,

And mother earth, now brown and bare,  
Will soon a nuptial green robe wear.

## 6. Ushas

The loveliest and daintiest of all Vedic deities is the golden dawn, the maiden-goddess Ushas. "The morning twilight grades to pearl and amber." The 113th song in the first Rig ring or cycle begins:

Idam sreshtham jyotisham jyotir agat;  
Your light has come, of all the lights  
the fairest!

The enthused minstrel heaps image on image, comparison on comparison, as he gazes in adoration on the first rosy glimmer in the eastern sky, on the fair goddess Ushas:

Sweetly you smile, O goddess fair,  
Disclosing all your youthful grace,  
Your bosom bright, your radiant face,  
The lustre of your golden hair.

So shines a fond and winning bride  
Who robes her form in brilliant guise,  
And to her lord's admiring eyes  
Displays her charms with artless pride.

Or virgin, by her mother decked,  
 Who, glorying in her beauty, shows  
 In every glance her power.—She knows  
 All eyes to fix, hearts to subject.

Or actress who by skill and song  
 And dance and graceful gestures light,  
 And many-colored vestures bright,  
 Enchants the eager-gazing throng.

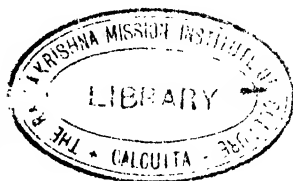
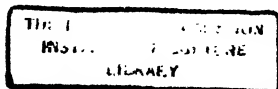
Or maid who (wont her limbs to lave  
 In some cool stream deep in the wood,  
 Girt round by sylvan solitude)  
 Emerges fairer from the wave.

Our poet adores the dawn as Shelley the skylark:

Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded  
 not;

Like a high-born maiden  
 In a palace tower,  
 Soothing her love-laden  
 Soul in secret hour  
 With music sweet as love which overflows  
 her bower ;

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Like a glow-worm golden  
 In a dell of dew,  
 Scattering unbeholden  
 Its aerial hue .  
 Among the flowers and grass which screen  
       it from the view;

Like a rose embowered  
 In its own green leaves,  
 By warm winds deflowered,  
 Till the scent it gives  
 Makes faint with too much sweet these  
       heavy-wingéd thieves.

Ushas has dawned on the earliest generations of men, and therefore is the oldest goddess. She also dawns on the present race, and will rejuvenate her ancient charms until the end of time,—the ever-youthful Ushas. In the Sunday schools of ancient India, if a modern term may be applied to a feature of antiquity, children were asked nature riddles by their brahmin-teachers, for example: Who is the oldest and yet the youngest deity? The answer was of course: Ushas! and then the priestly preceptor would explain the nature and beauty of the rosy-fingered maid. A Vedic song runs in this strain:

Fair Ushas, though through years untold  
 You have lived on, yet you are born  
 Anew on each succeeding morn,  
 And so you are both young and old.

Their round our generations run,  
 The old depart, and in their place  
 Springs ever up a younger race,  
 While you, immortal dawn, look on.

All those who watched for you of old  
 Are gone, and new 'tis we who gaze  
 On your approach. In coming days  
 Shall other men your beams behold.

The daily toiler rising at dawn feels energized and  
 vitalized by Ushas:

When Ushas pierces the grey gloom,  
 Birds flutter forth from every brake,  
 Hard toilers from earned sleep awake,  
 Ready their labor to resume.

Bright goddess, let your genial rays  
 Bring to our homes abundant wealth  
 Of cattle, steeds and sons, with health  
 And joy of heart and length of days.

The Vedic age was still joyous and optimistic, but when the Aryans descended to the hot jungles of the Gangetic plain, their poetry turned contemplative, and their philosophy ascetic and pessimistic; they began to view this earth as a vale of tears, and earth life as the shadow of death. It was in epical times that the Ganges valley was brahminized; Rig lyrics, being con-



fined to the Punjab, hardly ever mention the sacred river.

## 7. Y a m a

Yama, the primogenitor of the human race, was the first mortal, and hence the first departed. He first entered the abodes of the dead, and Vedic Hindus invoked him as god of death. They propitiated Yama with holy hymns and offerings. There is a sweet legend of princess Savitri who snatched her husband's soul from Yama's net by charming the angel of death with tender song. The suaveness of a woman's tongue and the simple courage of a woman's heart wrought miracles:

Like to an image of dark gold she seemed,  
That miracle, with eyes purple and soft  
As lotus petals,—that pure perfect wife.  
(Arnold)

Single-minded love, that is the moral and meaning of the Sanskrit legend, love that is faithful in life, remains loyal beyond the grave, and even conquers Yama, the agony of death.

But the touching Savitri episode was composed in the heroic age which marks the Aryan advance down the Ganges. In Vedic India we can watch the

making of Yama, the prince of the dead being still the first-born and first-departed:

Yama first took the hidden road  
By which in long procession men  
Pass on to his unknown abode.  
Pay homage to king Yama then!

Our fathers all that way have passed,  
And that same path we too shall trace,  
And every new succeeding race  
Of mortal men, while time shall last.

Yama means twin, twilight, and signified in the polar home, like Roman Janus, the winter solstice; the janitor, so to speak, or portal from the departed light (pitriyana) to its rejuvenation in January.

## 8. B u r i a l R i t e s

From the god of death it is but a step to the funeral service. Burial and cremation were equally prevalent in Vedic India. A Sanskrit dirge gives the very details of the last rites. In this particular instance the deceased was an officer of noble lineage. His right hand holds a handsomely carved bow, the emblem of his military prowess and profession. The dead archer's nearest kinsman, maybe a son or a brother, takes the bow from his cold and rigid hand:

Often you spanned this wood to slay the foe;  
From your stiff hand I take the silent bow.

The priest then consecrates the corpse:

Rest in the lap of kindly mother earth!  
Dissolve, ere your drooped spirit take new  
birth.

Literally, "may you be shielded from death and destruction." As the grave is dug, and the hearse is lowered, the officiating cleric invokes the broad-breasted mother:

Earth, open wide! shroud, bed him; mother,  
throw  
Your warm garb round your latest babe  
below.—

In another funeral chant the brahmin bids the elements which compose the body, now that it is dead, to return to the everlasting cosmic source whence they have sprung:

First must each severed element  
That joined to form your living frame  
Flit to the region whence it came,  
And with its parent-source be blent.

The breath is to return to the wind, the eye to the sun, the astral or ethereal parts to the starry skies:

Earth shall your earthy parts absorb,  
Your life-breath to the winds shall fly,  
Your astrals to the starry sky,  
Your eyes shall seek the solar orb.

All imperfections leave behind,  
Assume your ancient frame once more,  
Each limb and sense you had before,  
From every earthly taint refined.

And now shine forth with glory bright,  
With life intenser, nobler; blest  
With large capacity to taste  
A fuller measure of delight.

Ideals which in humble wise  
You worshiped HERE with doubt and awe  
Shall THERE the darkening veil withdraw  
Which hid their glory from your eyes.

All that is now obscure shall become plain to your expanded faculties. Deva, ideal, means literally luminary, then "god." What are pagan gods but personified idols and ideals?

The good that you performed on earth,  
Each noble impulse, selfless deed,  
Shall THERE receive its ample meed,  
And shall determine your new birth.

The above is a free rendering. "Let life rejoin the body," says the text. The Vedic age believed in rebirth after death, although that faith was not formulated until later. There is a Rig prayer for immortality "in undecaying worlds wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines" (9,113).

### 9. W e d d i n g   B e l l s

From the gloomy to the gay, from burial to bridal, from funeral rites to wedding bells! Before the Vedic bride left the parental home, her guardian-spirit, the spirit of virginity, was humorously asked to leave his ward in future alone, and attend to her younger sisters; they too need suitable husbands:

Away from here! this girl has found a  
                   husband.  
 Look out in Aryan homes for other  
                   daughters,  
 And leave the willing bride with her fond  
                   bridegroom.

The brahmin then exhorts the blushing bride:

Enter your new home, be the household's  
                   mother,  
 The lady-matron of your gathered people!

The groom grasps her hand with the prescribed words:

I grasp your hand that we may gain good  
fortune,  
And jointly reach old age, a hundred winters.

Literally, "a hundred autumns." More archaic passages give the normal span of life as *sata hima*, a hundred snowdrifts or winters which means a hundred years. Hoary tradition locates the Vedic ancestry in colder climes. Latin affinities of "*sata hima*" are "*centum*" and "*hiems*"; French *cent* and *hiver*. Himalay means wintry abode. As recollections of ice and snow, glaciers and polar bears, faded from the Hindu mind, the word winter was replaced by autumn, just as in America "fourteen days" have supplanted the old-fashioned fortnight, likewise a reminiscence of the Arctic way of reckoning by nights, moons and winters.—

The Vedic bride next mounts the nuptial car which is specially built for the occasion. In fragrant timber the newly-weds ride to their home where another priest receives and blesses them before the consecrated hearth; god Agni is to witness their family union and domestic happiness. The brahmin chants with up-lifted hands:

Be never parted, dwell ye here,  
Reach the full span of human life,  
With sons and grandsons sport and play.

Finally the young wife is warned, not to nag or be shrewish:

Be an obedient wife and gentle-tempered,  
 Revere the gods, bear to your husband  
                   heroes,  
 Bring blessings on your home by innate  
                   sweetness.

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#### 10. G a m b l e r ' s P l a i n t

Gambling and betting are not peculiar to our age, but are as old as mankind. The tenth Rig cycle has a song under the caption "Gambler's Plaint". The poor fool cannot keep away from the club-house (sabha) which was a dance-hall and gaming-house as well. Vedic club-men played neither cards nor billiards, but dice. The dice-berries tempt the gambler; he cannot resist, and feels despondent:

Last month ye waved and nodded on  
                   the nut-tree,  
 Ye now bewitch me on the spreading  
                   dice-board.  
 Your eyes laugh merrily like foaming  
                   mead-cups,  
 Prepared with milk, wild honey and sweet  
                   woodruff.

Vedic tipplers did not know beer or wine, but drank mead. The honey-intoxicant took the place of our cocktail and highball.

At noon I promise not to play at night-time,  
But then my boon-companions will desert  
me.

The music of the dice thrills and enthrals  
me,  
I steal forth like a lover to his sweetheart.

The gambler hurries to the game-house  
musing;  
Tonight I'm sure to win! he thinks elated.  
Alas! the brown dice cruelly oppose him,  
He leaves his earnings at the gaming-table.

### 11. R u s h F o r W e a l t h

The Vedic age was as mad after name and fame and money as our own, but payment was made in kind and kine rather than coin. "Running after cows" may be freely rendered "rush for wealth."

Many brahmins practised law, and wanted rich clients; army men looked out for wives from wealthy and influential clans, and the medical profession wished for important cases. "The ways of men are different," hums our young poet, but their motives and purposes are alike, be they mill-grinders or



medicine-men, priests or poets. The little satire begins : "karur aham, a poet I!" Karur means literally cr-eating, the creative mind or poet.

*Karur aham, tato bhishag,*

I am a poet, and father is a bhishag or medical practitioner.

*Upala-prakshini nana,*

mother is a mill-grinder; she grinds meal on an upala or millstone. Indian women still operate the quern or hand-mill. Their Vedic sisters enjoyed a considerable measure of liberty and latitude, but had to do all the necessary household drudgery, such as spinning and weaving, cooking and grinding.

*Tato bhishag,*

*Upala-prakshini nana.*

Tata is a medicine-man, and nana is a mill-grinder. Tata and nana, the Sanskrit for daddy and mamma, are babies' talk like Spanish ninyo, mother's boy. The two words savor of the nursery, and the whole little ditty reads like a vaudeville snatch in the original.

The carpenter desires a smash,  
The medicine-man a fractured bone,  
And brahmins wealthy patronage.

Karur aham, tato bhishag,  
 Upalaprakshini nana,  
 Dad is a leech, and I weave songs,  
 The mater grinds meal in a quern,  
 We all have various thoughts and plans.

The village smith wants customers,  
 Horses a light car, frogs a pool,  
 We show our skill in diff'rent ways.

There is considerable controversy about the meaning of the short poem; the much disputed verses were perhaps sung at a Vedic masque.

## 12. V e d i c M a s q u e s

Prior to spring's advent, equinoctial gales burst through massive monster clouds which overhang the gloomy sky. Indra, aided by his shock troops, the maruts, kills the winter-giant in the vernal fray, and sets the cloud-jailed showers free. Rain refreshes the fertile uplands, and makes the golden soma-herbage grow, the elating forerunner of the purple vine. Vedic masques were performed at the Spring Festival, and ended with a som-libation offered to Indra whose drinking-bouts were reckoned equal to his battle-feats.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Mead was prepared from som, Avestic haom, a juicy herb. German "seim" means honey-fluid, herbal sap, grape juice. Greek cognates bear the Iranian initial. Hyes, the exhilarating spirit of the grape, is nursed by the hyads

It is quite possible that our poetic skit, with a refrain calling on Indra, was a dramatic invocation for a fruitful year. If it was meant for a pageant or masque, the setting and scaffolding might have been as follows.

The karu, being spokesman and precentor, leads the chorus of storm-gods who are clad in golden breastplates and shining armor. They tread a gleaming sword-dance in honor of their captain Indra. The spokesman then introduces six stage celebrants. Tata and Nana represent the senescent season, the barrenness of the dying year; the resourceful fertility of the new year sounds the death-knell of the aged couple. The next to appear are village smith and medicine-man. The one fashions and creates, and the other heals by charm and chant. Both signify productive and restorative energy. Last of all enter two mummers, capped with a horse's and frog's head. Leap-frog, a messenger of fruitful rain, croaks in spring. Hobby-horse, decked with sprigs of may and bunting, prances gaily. All six masqueraders, Tata and Nana, Smith and Leech, Bull-frog and Hobby-horse, are wreathed with fresh green leaves, and sing in a chorus:

We all have diff'rent thoughts and plans,  
And show our skill in various ways.

---

or rain-stars, and lies lifeless in the cold and humid winter months; the sacred light revives Bacchus in spring. In Vedic lore, the northern light is procreated or pressed out (suta) like soma.

Spokesman (karu):

I sing.—This old man is a leech,  
The mater fills the quern with grain.  
The ways of men are different.

Chorus:

Pour forth for Indra sparkling som!

Spokesman (pointing to the mummers):

The carpenter desires a smash,  
The medicine-man a fractured bone,  
The village smith rich customers.  
Leap-frog, jump high! prance, hobby-  
horse!<sup>1</sup>

Poor Tata and Nana have been given rough treatment by the young New-year ; the inclement season is battered, bruised and expiring. But the medicine-man rejuvenates old pop and grannie; his leechcraft transforms them to blithe children of budding May. At the close of the Masque a collection is taken; the showman gratefully acknowledges the donations.—The interpretation of Vedic lyrics diverges widely, and is still in its infancy.

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1. See the last note to " Marionettes and Pantomimes " in the author's Indian Theatre.

## 13. The Jungle Fay

From satire to romance! The subjoined nature song, dainty and romantic, needs interpretative music. Setting and situation are simple enough.

A farmer, belated in the wood, is anxious to reach his homestead before nightfall. He loses his way in the dense aranya or forest, and feels bewildered. The Vedic age was superstitious ; each tree and meadow, brook and wood, seemed alive with elves and fairies. The aranya was fabled to be haunted by the aranyani or jungle fay, and to her loving protection our timid hero commends his soul, as a devout Catholic might cross himself, and mutter an Ave Maria under similar circumstances. The song begins:

Aranyani, aranyani!

O jungle fay, o jungle fay,  
Where is the homestead of my kin?  
You too seem lost mid forest trees,  
I wonder if YOU are afraid?

The cuckoo's call awakes response  
From feathered throats on waving boughs.  
The wild and joyous woodland notes  
Delight the happy jungle fay.

Belated wand'ers in the wood  
 Can see at nightfall wondrous sights:  
 A far-off village, grazing kine,  
 And timber hewn by unseen hands.

They hear the wailing and the moan  
 Of the felled giant, creaking carts.  
 Strange fancies flit across the mind  
 When darkness falls on rustling trees.

The wood-fay never harms a soul,  
 Unless she is provoked to wrath.  
 She lives on cool and luscious fruit,  
 And rests on a soft couch of moss.

Fragrant with many a spice is she,  
 Berry and herb grow lavishly.  
 My song extols the jungle fay,  
 Refuge and mother of shy deer.

#### 14. F o l k - P o e t r y

Folk-songs were as popular in Vedic times as in the Homeric age. There is a snatch of a plowman's song in the Rig collection:

Merrily let the plowshare furrow the dark  
 sod!

Merrily let the plowboy drive his oxen!

A peasant-lass, waiting for her lover, mutters a slumber-charm:

Sastu mata, sastu pita,  
 Sastu swa, sastu vispatih!  
 Sleep, mother, sleep,  
 Sleep, father, sleep!  
 Watchdog sleep! household, sleep!  
 Slumber deep, fall asleep!

The same sentiment swayed Lord William's ladybird,  
 Ellen:

The knight's to the mountain,  
 The bugle to wind;  
 The lady's to greenwood  
 Her garland to bind.

The bow'r of Burd Ellen  
 Has moss on the floor,  
 That the step of Lord William  
 Be silent and sure.

### 15. E v e n S o n g

The last contribution from Vedic lyrics is an Even Song; the rich word-painting again waits for descriptive music.

The day draws in, night spreads her wings,  
 The goddess with a thousand eyes,  
 Adorned in star-embroidered robe.

Queenly, majestic, she dispels  
 Her younger sister's rosy tints;  
 The gloaming pales before the night.

Immortal night! your silver blaze  
 Fills hill and lowland far and wide:  
 Chase gloom and darkness from the land!

Blest night! you silently approach;  
 We seek our welcome resting-place,  
 As birds fly home to their warm nest.

Each villager now goes to rest,  
 All living things, kine and wild fowl,  
 E'en restless eagles go to rest.

The herds are safe in shed and pen,  
 Goddess, keep wolves and thieves away,  
 Protect us, gracious night, till morn.

## 16. T H E A R C T I C N E S T

Goddess, keep wolves and thieves away!

Before the Aryans entered the Punjab, the migrant herdsmen had to contend with prairie-wolves, prowling round their primitive homesteads in more northern latitudes such as Khiva or Merv, between the Aral lake and Afghanistan. Mount Meru, sacred in Sanskrit



lore, has been fancifully located in the mountainous tracts south of Merv, but the two homonyms have nothing in common. A safer conjecture aligns Arctis with the fabled mountain where the sun (Vishnu) rises once a year, and where the seven-starred Wain, the Great Bear, never sets. Meru suggests a fading reminiscence of frozen skies, swept by boreal storms (the mad maruts), and of the north pole itself. The Hindu descent from the Iranian tableland, haunted by ravenous wolves, is now generally accepted. But the remoter conception that glaciation once chilled the polar nest, that drift-ice and floods drove man to rock shelters where prehistoric Aryans had to fight with the cave-bear, is still flouted as untenable. And yet there must have been a time when Aryans were cavemen. They wielded crude stone-axes, and grappled with the grim grizzly, both parties displaying savage strength.

The cataclysm, traditionally known as the deluge, is narrated in Genesis as a far-off event. Tilak, a brilliant Hindu astronomer and archæologist, has read recollections of Arctic life into the Rig Veda. These lyrics certainly re-echo ancestral fame won in Iran. But it almost takes one's breath away when Tilak insists that Rig depicts atmospheric conditions which can only relate to the aurora borealis. The northern light suffuses the Arctic sky like a clear transparent veil. The green-edged fan tiptoes silently across the wide horizon; subdued tints of the soft afterglow coax gleaming star-groups. The brightest is the "Great Bear", named after the polar bear or ice-bear which

once confronted the Aryans. The Rig Veda describes how sparkling darts of milky white begin to dance and prance, to leap and bound, in mad frolic, like daintiest elves playing hide-and-seek in the mild moonlight. The skies ring out a sudden symphony in radiant hues. Cream, red, yellow, silver, gold, all drifting, span in swift motion the celestial panorama like a swaying curtain, gay-lined in every fold.

A throb, a sob, a sudden glimmer fair!  
 And magic-like  
 The nebula has vanished in thin air,  
 Spent are the shafts of the ethereal pike.  
 (Aagard)

Saptarksh, trimmed to saptarshi, is the Vedic name for the Great Bear. The word is derived from Sanskrit sapta (seven) and riksha (bear), but popularly connoted with rishi (seer), since polar bears are absent from India as they are from classical soil. Septentrion, clipt and maimed for the same reason, signifies "north" as well. Arktos, the Greek form of riksha, has three meanings: bear, great bear, north; hence arctic or northern.

The northern light is compounded of nitrogen crystals; this explains the green-edged fan. The electricity of sunrays brings out green tints inherent in crystal flakes which flock in the upper air. When the sun bombards these dancing specks of dust, the aurora

borealis appears. Crystalline dust also accounts for the blue color of the sky.

Tilak's fascinating theory may be thus summarized. In antediluvian times the polar zone was habitable, and tenanted by man. Elemental upheavals altered the geological shape and the climatic conditions of this changeable earth. Throughout æons one terrestrial revolution succeeded another. The last Ice Age came. Glaciers melted. The catastrophic thaw was followed by a deluge. The flood forced the Aryan germ-man to migrate south. From where now Spitzbergen rises in icy seas he may have pushed on to Finnish swamps, and to the amber-yielding littoral of Lithuania; even further south to mother Volga's sleepy shores and the breezy slopes of Caucasus. But all this is modern geography. When history dawns, Aryan troglodytes are found between the Urals and Carpathian Mountains, and from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea. As butterflies emerge from the chrysalis, so these primitive hunters adopted pastoral modes of life, and began to raise cattle. Then bulldog fights ensued over the tenure of the best grassland. The ultimate upshot was the Indo-European split and spread; the Aryan migration and linguistic distribution over India and Europe.

## 17. Transcending the Stars

An ancient Norse scald speculates on primeval chaos:

'Twas time's first dawn  
 When naught yet was,  
 Nor time nor sea  
 Nor rolling wave.  
 Earth was not there  
 Nor heaven above,  
 Naught save a void,  
 A yawning gulf,  
 But verdure none. (Edda, Voluspa).

A Vedic bard enlarges on the thought of chaotic confusion, and declares that desire changed yawning chaos to cosmic order. The throb of eternal life made its "appearance" (asat; literally non-reality). The manifest reflects the hidden; phenomena mirror uncreate "reality" (sat). Sages discriminate between sat and asat; they alone see Being entangled in non-being. Name after name has been bestowed by priest and poet on the ultimate pair of opposites in this compound universe: God and nature, spirit and matter, substance and shadow, the boundless and finite, essence and semblance, sat and asat:

When naught yet was,  
 No change, no form,  
 Nor sky nor air,

Nor day nor night,  
 Dark covered dark.  
 Then rose desire,  
 The primal seed  
 Of life create.  
 Sages who search  
 Deep in their hearts  
 Know that it is  
 Desire which links  
 Sat and asat. (Rig 10, 129).

Extremes touch each other. Rig lyrics take the loftiest flights of transcendentalism, and at the same time dip into the primitive life of cave-dwellers. The whole collection covers a vast historic span, and beyond that gives glimpses of the arctic calendar and seasonal festivals, thus documenting the riddling records of paleolithic rocks.

## 18. A n t h o l o g y

The above Rig quotations are taken from various translations; Jungle Fay and Even Song have been paraphrased by the author. The entire Rig treasure of song is divided in ten cycles, each sacred ring or

rondo comprising about a hundred lyrics. The sub-joined eighteen are commended for a first reading:

- 1,115 Sunrise
- 1,124 Morning Chant
- 2,28 Forgive our sins, o Varuna!
- 3,33 The Children of the Bharatas pass  
safely across the divided waters
- 4,57 Plowman's Song
- 5,85 His works shall praise him
- 6,27 Fighting in Iran
- 7,83 Thanksgiving for victory after the Ten  
Kings' Battle
- 7,87 The Earth is the Lord's
- 8,29 Nature Riddles
- 9,112 Rush for Wealth
- 10,18 Funeral Dirge .
- 10,34 Gambler's Sorrow
- 10,85 Marriage Rite
- 10,97 Humorous Reflections of a Herbalist
- 10,127 Even Song
- 10,129 When naught yet was
- 10,146 The Jungle Fay.<sup>1</sup>

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1. All 18 have been translated into German by Hillebrandt (Göttingen, 1913; 152 pages).

## V. MATTER AND SPIRIT

The fate and fortune of graziers as well as farmers is largely determined by nature's freaks and fancies. Her forceful and fitful elements awe primitive society which figures them as ghosts and spirits. Sun and sea, spring showers and winter storms, the whole of nature, with all her terrific discords and sweeter harmonies, was sacred to the Hindu herdsmen of old ; their poet-priests invoked the universal mother, and transmuted her manifold manifestations to a crowd of gods and genii. Father sky was fabled to preside over the unseen spirit-world. His vicegerent and lieutenant is the growling thunderer by whose side the howling gales fight in the elemental warfare of the sky. Daughters of the supreme ruler are the rosy-fingered dawn and the sun-kissed mermaids ; they were fairies of the rain-charged clouds, ere they descended to rule terrestrial springs and streams. The murmuring witch-waves have two impetuous wooers, the ardent sungod and the wanton wind. Nature-deities and their wondrous display of energy were praised and hymned by the ancient Hindus in the Veda or Wisdom of a thousand songs. The immanence of one God in nature is a much later conception. Divine unity, producing and permeating the vanity and variety of visible life, became the new faith of India, but the established Vedic clergy bitterly denounced that criminal heresy

which had to be propagated in lonely woods and secret societies, in aranyas and upanishads ; the last word came to mean " occult teachings ". Indian literature begins with Vedic lyrics. Next come piles of sacrificial tracts and treatises, highly technical, and then the Upanishads, a daring rebellion against the polytheism of the Veda. The esoteric tenet combats idolatry, and gives the many gods a symbolic interpretation ; thus the sungod is explained away as illumination engendered in pure hearts. Religion is self-realization, and not mere mental assent or dissent. The virgin-trail, struck by bold Upanishad pioneers in a wilderness of rambling thought, was scented by Buddha ; his spiritual protest and social reformation were even farther-reaching.

It is a common argument that the existence of God, and the immortality of soul, can never be proven. " Matter and force can be sensed, manipulated, controlled. They are sound realities, but the unmanifest is altogether outside the range of finite perception. The infinite is an enchanted castle, an idle speculation of unpractical dreamers." Such cheap commonplaces are true enough, as far as they go, since reflection and reason can only cognize exterior phenomena. But empiric truth is shallow and mediocre ; its current platitudes are neither comprehensive nor reliable. To contemplate the essence of things, and see right through them, as Plato, Michel Angelo and Shakespeare did, a higher intuition than mere intelligence is needed. Entanglement in matter, the lure of luxury and rush for gold, veil the vision of the soul. Marvelous are



our technical triumphs ; mechanical contrivances benefit every department of economic life, Modern science in all its subtle ramifications is unprecedented in the records of man. Unfortunately poetry and the drama, music and the fine arts, even prayer and sermon, have also been mechanized, and grown utilitarian ; soul is utterly lacking. But every age which traffics in ideals is productive of an ignoble and deadly materialism. So it was in the heyday of capitalistic Carthage, so in the decline of imperial Rome. Humanity, aided by reason alone, turns selfish, and resorts to brutal, heartless force ; its inevitable doom is a hopeless submersion in the mire of sickly sense excitement and muddy, mundane ambition. The Christian nations are still custodians of a faith which, despite temporary lapses and perversions, continues to uphold a tottering civilization. Indian Buddhism was engaged in the same soul-saving task. So were, long before Buddha, amid a surging sea of glib talk and haughty error, the sane Upanishad sages whose deep conviction of immortality was a constant inspiration to human betterment.

## VI. THE UPANISHADS

O do not call your own what may be lost  
again,  
The world means to withdraw all gifts  
bestowed on man.  
Dwell on eternal things, my heart, of  
heaven dream!  
Hold earth's cheap vanities justly in low  
esteem. (Bernard of Clairvaux)

### 1. Priests and Nobles

Under the politic guidance of the priestly caste, the vast Vedic organization hardened to a most powerful sacerdotalism, just as Islam was consolidated to a huge ecclesiastical government, the long-vanished caliphate of Bagdad. Sacrificial ceremonies, bearing on the minutest details of private life, were worked out by the indefatigable brahmins, and gently enforced on the laity. The elaborate ritual, resulting from the worship of Vedic gods, is deposited in the Brahmanatreatises. Their horizon is overcast by heavy clouds of grey theology, but every now and again the blue laughing sky peeps through the solid texture, and brightens the gloom of dull sacramental precepts with golden fancies of legendary lore. The ever-growing

influence of the brahminic hierarchy undermined the national prestige of the humiliated warrior-caste. A vigorous reform movement, effectually backed by the nobility, was in the first place directed against clerical predominance, but also impugned frigid formalism and rigid dogma. There must have been considerable culture and enlightenment among the Hindu gentry, otherwise they could never have endorsed and encouraged the superb Upanishad revolt or protest. The secret doctrine of the Upanishads refers to royal sages gracing the thrones of Hindustan, and lending lustre and refinement to the various courts. One of the saintliest was king Janaka of Videha, in the Patna district. His piety and learning are still a household word in India. The Videha palace halls were a kind of university where scholars were cordially welcomed, and where students flocked from every part of the country, to study the sciences and metaphysics. In his old age, Janaka renounced the glories of kingship, and withdrew to a forest retreat, *superna cogitans*, like St. Bernard ; to dwell on eternal things. The raja realized that the true test of human greatness is not the extent of worldly possessions, but the scope of moral power to renounce ownership. Even in the midst of regal splendor, the saintly king seemed little concerned about earthly grandeur and riches. Once the royal residence was a sheet of flame and rolling smoke. Janaka keenly felt the sufferings of his large household, but when some courtier sympathized and condoled with him personally, the venerable ruler

remarked calmly: " Friend, when my castle is ablaze, nothing belonging to Janaka is lost," implying that he who does not claim anything as his own, and lives on his estate as though he were a guest in another man's house, is the only free man in a crowd of slaves. They are abject slaves to possessions, bemoan every loss, and resent any encroachment.

The sacrificial portions of the old prose Upanishads are penned in the same ponderous and archaic style as the brahmanas from which they have sprung. The Upanishads are a fragrant garden, purple and gay with the fair bloom of the wisdom of the heart, but from a literary point of view utterly and inevitably spoiled by the weeds of uprooted dogma which lie scattered everywhere. They are the death-knell of worn-out ritualism, with an occasional satiric touch, but sarcasm and humor are more muffled than in *Don Quixote*. Medieval knighthood and chivalry, rung out by the Spanish romance, sounded hollow and lifeless in the sixteenth century. The Upanishads rang in democratic and broader views, culminating in the socialistic teachings of the Buddhists. The new age threatened to level caste distinctions, reconcile Aryan highbrows with untouchables, and overthrow the sacerdotal polity of the race-conscious brahmins. Buddha even dislodged priestly Sanskrit in favor of the vulgar tongue. The costly cult of imaginary gods was dethroned by self-culture, and animal sacrifices by the spirit of self-sacrifice.

The Upanishads were not the only intellectual movement, headed by the progressive warrior-caste. Vedic lyrics have a military background, and are largely thankofferings for tribal victories and captured spoil. No less family-proud than the haughty priesthood were those daring cattle-lifters in the Punjab where they marched and marauded under Indra's martial banner. Buddha was an aristocrat with a proletarian bent, ever one in purpose and endeavor with husbandmen and artisans, while other lords of the upper caste, temporal as well as spiritual, put selfish class interests high above the "negligible" welfare of the masses.

## 2. Forest Sages

It was a time-hallowed custom of high-caste Hindus, when their hair turned white, to resign civic duties, renounce all family ties, and exchange the household life for the homeless state. In a simple bungalow, in the quiet of the aranya or forest, these forest sages, their minds set free from worldly cares, abandoned themselves exclusively to atmabodhi or meditation on atma, on their innermost self and spiritual essence. Some would tell thrilling experiences of the inner life, and these delightful soul-confessions and self-realizations were reverently collected by loving disciples, and subsequently arranged in aranyakas or Jungle Books. The aranyakas are a jumble and tumble

of profound ideas and beautiful parables, abounding in poetic illustration, ringing in music and imagery, and sparkling with the divine fire of genius. Their philosophical portions, the Upanishads, as a system of thought, are disjointed and incoherent. But they have intrinsic worth and historic value, since the Upanishads are the basis whereon Indian psychology and metaphysics have been raised.

Upanishad, from upa (near) and sad (sit), means "sitting near"; students, eager for atmabodhi or self-realization, sitting near a revered teacher outside his asrama or bungalow, and listening to sage discourse in the cool of the declining day,—the slanting sunbeams flooding with orange, green and purple the gilded crest of hill and tree, until the shadows of evening deepened, and darkness crept over everything, save the illumined heart of the holy preceptor.

Forest sages were sannyasis, renunciants, the whole aim of their life being sannyasa or renunciation of desire. As a raindrop runs off a lotus leaf, so desireless souls are unaffected by relative qualities, either good or bad. A man, free from vain imaginings, has no longer a will of his own, and cannot do intentional wrong. Evil does not overcome him; he overcomes evil. But let the sannyasi beware of spiritual pride, lest he fall again from that pure and passive state. Without a turn of heart, without regeneration, all efforts to do good or be good are fruitless; they move in a vicious circle, and are shackled to the ever-

revolving cosmic wheel. Munis, the silent sages of old, knew that law, and gave up all longing for progeny. Desire for sons, they reasoned, is desire for possessions, and love of property is love of the world. They who might have lived at ease preferred the uncertainties of life. Munis chose to be migratory hansas, wild swans of holiness, homeless pilgrims who longed for nothing but their eternal home. "The passage of all wanderers tends homeward," says Rig Veda 2,38,6. The Great Jungle Upanishad (4,4,22) read a deeper meaning into the Rig verse. Genius is prone to modernize and torture ancient texts. The dainty psychology of Goethe's Iphigenia shames the Greek mold and pattern. Upanishad thinkers constantly poured a new spirit, stronger and more elating, holier and truer, into the Vedic wine-skins. They exhorted to live in the community, but be above it. Mundane desires and vanities cannot enter the chosen vessel, full of the cosmic spirit, even as water cannot enter a well-built boat.

### 3. Y a g n a v a l k y a

The foremost cultural leader, mentioned in the Upanishads, was Yagnavalkya. King Janaka of Videha once solemnized an elaborate sacrifice to which all sages and savants of the realm were invited. The royal sacrificer, wishing to ascertain who was the most learned and eloquent among his guests, promised a fee

of a thousand cows, ten hecatombs in Greek money, to that theologian who would prove most skilled in expounding Vedic divinity. None presumed to claim the proffered prize, until high-minded Yagnavalkya told his foster-son to drive the cattle home. The distinguished assembly, many of them venerable brahmins, were highly indignant at such spiritual arrogance, and in their resentment they put deep and subtle catch-questions, insisting that, before appropriating the cows, Yagnavalkya by his answers should at least prove the superior wisdom which he claimed so over-confidently. Yagnavalkya then delivered such a dynamic discourse on the immortality of atma, that inmost soul-force and essence which vitalizes our mortal frame, and energizes all nature, that everybody present was awed and stunned; even the saintly raja, king Janaka of Videha, bowed low and paid reverence to the sage. But Yagnavalkya seemed quite unconcerned, and according to a later tradition had the thousand head of cattle distributed among the needy.

#### 4. Maitreyi

The above anecdote is told in the eleventh book of the Brihad Aranyaka or Great Jungle Upanishad. The same Upanishad has another Yagnavalkya story from which we learn that the laws of ancient India sanctioned polygamy, and also permitted woman to hold property in her name. Hindu zenanas have been



cleaner and nobler than Turkish harems. Feminine disability regarding ownership was introduced in India since the Mohammedan conquest. Moslems generally take a lower attitude towards women whom Hindus on the contrary always treated as equals and companions in glad and sad days. A poetic corroboration is Savi-tri's loyalty to her husband; even death was unable to separate the twin-souls.

"Maitreyi," said Yagnavalkya, "I am about to leave home and live in the forest. Hence I wish to dispose of my worldly effects, and make a settlement between you and my other wife."

Maitreyi answered: "Dearest husband, if this whole earth with all the wealth in it were mine, tell me, would that give me immortality?"

"No, indeed!" replied Yagnavalkya. "Your life would be easy, and you would have a good time like rich folks. But there is no hope of immortality merely through wealth."

Maitreyi reflected for a moment and, uplifting her pensive eyes, enquired: "What should I do with that whereby I do not become immortal? Pray, let my lord instruct me in what he knows of immortality."

Yagnavalkya then made answer: "Maitreyi, you are very dear to me, and pleasing are the words you speak. Sit down, dearest, let me explain, and listen well to what I have to say."

"A wife should love her husband, not only because he is her husband, but chiefly because she loves atma

in her husband. And a husband should love his wife, not only because she is his wife, but chiefly because he loves atma in his wife. Parents should love their children, and children their parents, friends their friends, and men their fellow-men, not only because of the human relationship they bear to each other, but chiefly because they love atma, the immortal self which is hidden in the heart of every creature. Truly it is that divine self which we mean when we say: I love my husband, or I love my wife, or my child, or my friend, or my fellow-being."

"Whoever is conscious of atma, and feels in vital touch with the all-pervasive force of that eternal presence: that atma-budh or atma-knower, he is the true believer, and to him, Maitreyi, belongs immortality; unto none else, unto none else."

"As we cannot seize the sounds of a conch-shell by themselves unless we seize the conch-shell or the shell-blower, and as we cannot touch the tint or scent of a lotus unless we touch the lotus flower, even so, dearest, is it with atma. It is impossible to perceive or reason about atma; the seer cannot be seen, and the knower cannot be known. The eye can see all things except itself, but is imaged in a mirror. So is the glory of atma mirrored in the reflection of a pure and clear mind."

"As clouds of smoke rise from a fire kindled with dry fuel, so have all the holy mantras, the Vedic spells, been breathed forth from atma, that infinite being."

“ And as all waters rush to the sea, as all sensations pass to the skin, all tastes to the tongue, all colors to the eye, all sounds to the ear, all actions to the muscles, all thoughts to the brain, and all wisdom to the heart,

Even so is it with man, Maitreyi, when he enters into yoga or communion with atma or cosmic consciousness.”

“ When a lump of salt is thrown into water, it dissolves, and cannot be taken out again. But wherever you taste the water, you can taste the salt. Atma, out of the boundless ocean of his infinite love, has fashioned and flavored all these worlds, only to draw them back unto himself, back to their uncreate and godlike state. To the wise who know it belongs immortality, unto none else, unto none else.”

And Yagnavalkya walked away to the solitude of the aranya.—

These monistic ideas are golden threads, cast like a glittering network over the Upanishads. Vedic scholasticism has woven the floating gossamer of brilliant fancy in a fine texture of connected thought known as Vedanta.

## 5. Appearance and Reality

The so-called realities of life, failure and success, sadness and gladness, April tears and laughter, crabbed

old age and sparkling buoyant youth, are but a passing spectacle, a variety show, constantly enacted before the enwrap and entrapped senses. But higher values abide beneath the crowd of fleeting sensations; permanent substance is hidden behind flitting shadows. As atma spurs the grandiose dreamlife, the roused mind presses on to coherent thought and concerted action. Sakti-flooded and power-driven, the soul rushes in spiritual torrents from theory to practice, and from rhetoric to reality. Fears and fetters fall off before the majesty of Being. Confronting the vagaries of the mobile mind stands as a tranquil witness eternal atma, the glorious self which like brilliant firework breaks forth in myriads of names and forms, even as the mild moon radiates in an infinitude of silver beams which flood with magic light the transfigured landscape. Moonlight has no existence apart from the lunar orb. Similarly, the whole cosmos and its greatest achievement, man, moves in atma, its primal source and fountain-head. Atma is our light, breath and soul; in atma we exist and plan and jostle. Being young, we claim liberty of action, but hard experience soon teaches us that we have to follow a higher law than our own sweet will. Character and environment, karma and dharma, shut us in on all sides, curb our desires, thwart our planning and purpose. According to Vedanta, the regimented philosophy of the Upanishads, human nature is not free, however much we may boast of apparent liberty. As soon as we feel our nothingness outside atma, we

learn to abase and reject ourselves. Along with self-abandonment comes self-realization which means spiritual liberty. Atma alone is real (sat), while individuality is unreal (asat), shifting and transient, a moving picture, and part of the cosmic veil of nature (maya). Sat means literally "that which is." Reality "is" and abides. Sat is unchangeable, beyond evolution and its laws. Yet sat is not static; the veil of maya is worn and torn by supple sat. Maya signifies "measurable," and constitutes the tangible, visible, objective world.

There is a Upanishad prayer addressed to atma:

Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya:  
From tamas lead me to jyotis,  
From gloom to light!

Mrityor m'amritam gamaya:  
From mrityu lead me to amrita,  
From death to immortality!

Amrita is the Greek ambrosia, food of immortals, the magic well of eternal youth and never-fading beauty; the divine intoxicant tastes and touches atma everywhere. In the amrita-crucible the foulest filth is transmuted to purest gold. The third line runs:

Asato ma sad gamaya:  
From asat lead me unto sat,  
From the unreal and apparent to the  
real and true!

From night to light, from death to life, from appearance to reality! Soul is free and immortal, but life is transitory, and dictated by necessity. The links of causation enforce evolution. Every thought and "act" (karma) compels retribution, or as Emerson puts it, has its compensation. Reward grows on the same stem as virtue. Seed and fruit, cause and effect, cannot be severed. The result already blossoms in the intention, and the end pre-exists in the means employed.

## 6. Transmigration

Emerson's ideas harmonize with Indian teachings. The Rig Veda recognizes suffering as the wages of sin. Evolution implies involution. Vedanta, carrying the doctrine of development to a transcendental conclusion, arrives at the theory of pre-existent states where the practical western mind is reluctant to follow.

"When the body dies, then karma falls asleep, as we say in India; vitality remains in seed-form. When the time is ripe, the dormant germs shoot up in renewed alacrity and activity, just as bulbs, left in the ground, will bud forth in due season. But the threads of human karma are subtle and more tangled than the complexion of lower life forms, and therefore do not evolve so speedily out of their involved state. Ours is a rational universe; there is an underlying reason for everything, though we cannot always give it. No-

body but ourselves is responsible for what we do and are. We have made our karma, and we alone can modify, and in the end unmake it."

Such were the arguments enunciated by a sannyasi at a London reception, and when a merchant's wife remarked: "But how is it, swami, babies look all so sweet and innocent; surely, there cannot be any guilt in them!", the confident answer was given: "Seeds of karma are like debit and credit balances in a mercantile ledger; at the end of the year, they are carried over to the new account. The transferred figures look simple enough, but only the bookkeeper's trained eye can detect in them the ultimate result of a long chain of last year's complicated and completed transactions. Even so can the visionary eye of spiritual directors and soul-readers look right through the apparent simplicity of babes. Though sweetness and innocence seem written on their rosy faces, the souls of the little ones need salvation too; they are by no means clean slates. The sum-total of past experiences, follies and foibles included, is indelibly impressed on the babyish features. But you must be able to read the cryptogram, the secret code. It is quite true that little children are guiltless of criminal acts, but not of evil impulses, as half an hour's observation in the nursery or the boys' playground will prove."

The tenet of transmigration is not alien to western thinkers; Wordsworth, Browning and Lessing had it in their minds. The skilled weaver of dainty nature-hymns contemplated the constant evolution of the

child being father of the man. Wordsworth had a vision of old age being submerged in death, and re-emerging in life's spring-time:

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
 Had elsewhere a setting, and comes from  
     afar!  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God who is our home.

And Robert Browning at the bier of a sixteen-year-old girl:

God above  
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
 And creates the love to reward the love:  
 I claim you still for my own love's sake!

Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
 Through worlds I shall traverse, not  
     a few:

Much is to learn, much to forget,  
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since  
     then,

Given up myself so many times,  
 Gained me the gains of various men,  
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes...



Lessing whose clear-cut crystal-mind was rational and logical, if ever mind was, asks wonderingly: "Why should not every individual have existed more than once in this world? Have I not performed part of my evolution? Why may I not perform another time the remaining steps? Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of gaining fresh knowledge and experience? There must be much to repay the trouble of coming back. Rebirth is no loss of time. Is not all eternity mine?" (*Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes*; written a few months before Lessing's death).

## 7. Continuity of Type

The law of causation or karma, if carried to an extreme, enervates the mind, and impregnates it with the diseased germs of fatalism. And indeed, causality has spread its sombre shadows far and wide over India. In the vain endeavor to escape from the merciless law of endless action and reaction, Indian preachers sometimes command the crushing of desire. Self-repression is the essence of their wisdom. In the case of a few saints and sages, utter detachment is possible and excellent, but psycho-analysts trace many a crime and morbid mental condition to repressed desires. To satisfy legitimate longing is our healthy western ideal; the mystic East swarms with pensive ascetics, often as

mad as sad. For most of us it is best to harmonize matter and spirit, to co-ordinate faith and economics sanely. The senses are natives of the earth where soul is a forlorn pilgrim; our very self or essence is a migrant and alien in the world.

Individual reincarnation sounds weird enough. Transmigration of national karma seems a theory wilder still, though the strange notion is really more familiar in the Occident than the sister-thought of personal rebirth. It has been said that a typical Englishman rather than an Italian is heir to the sturdy physique, grave decorum, distance and dignity of the old Roman patrician. The land of Cicero and Cæsar seems to have transmitted a sense of fair play and social justice to Anglo-Saxons and their colonial offspring. Attic salt has become scarce in the marketplace of Athens, but abounds in the drawing-rooms of Paris. Again, many a young Hindu who studies Veda and Vedanta at Bonn or Vienna must be under the impression that much of the ancient learning of the asramas has migrated from the Ganges to the Rhine and Danube.

An ancient rune goes running in my blood,  
 A small refrain  
 That sings lost wonder and a dead delight,  
 And stirs old pain.

From out beyond the bar of memory  
It comes to me,  
And beats upon the shore of consciousness  
Insistently.

(Montgomery)

There is a continuity of type. Nations totter and collapse, but their typical qualities survive, and seek renewed expression as soon as the new soil is sufficiently prepared to receive and nurture them. The civilization of Greece passed on to Rome, and classical culture, after the decline and fall of the empire, resurged among the sturdy Nordics, the blond barbarians who greet the unseen with a cheer.

Transmigration of soul is the language of racial childhood; invariability of type is a more scientific term. The highest type, ever set before man, is the Christ -type; Christians are to contemplate, adore and imitate the perfect exemplar, until they grow from image to image into the likeness of their lord. Two thousand years ago, the divine type took incarnation, and migrated from age to age throughout the world. Wherever the Christ-impress has stamped individual or national character, the invariable result has been spiritual rebirth, manifest in self-discipline, fellow-service and social orderliness.

## 8. Nachiketas

The Nachiketas story, taken from the Katha Upanishad, commingles Sankhya and Vedanta, psychology and monism.

Nachiketas, a young student, went to Yama, the god of death, to learn atma-bodhi or self-realization. Yama instructed the boy in these words:

The wise who by means of internal recollection know the Ancient who is hidden in the cave of the heart leave joy and sorrow far behind.

The Ancient is not begotten nor can he ever die. He does not spring from anything, nor does anything spring from him.

The Ancient is uncreate and indestructible ; he cannot be slain, though the body wherein he temporarily dwells may be slain.—

This is quite Vedantic, and sounds like the Gita gem in the epical treasury:

Na jayate mriyate va,  
Not begotten, mortal neither,

or in Arnold's paraphrase:

Spirit was never born, and spirit will cease  
to be never.

Spirit at no time was not; end and beginning  
are dreams.

Birthless and deathless and changeless  
 remains the free spirit forever,  
 Death has not touched it at all, dead though  
 the house of it seems.

Yama proceeded: The wise who perceive the Ancient as hidden within all bodies, as immortal within mortal forms, they neither desire nor grieve.

The Ancient cannot be gained by knowledge of the Veda nor by understanding nor by much learning. But to a man, rid of desire and grievance, sat or truth becomes manifest.

He who is not tranquil and subdued, and whose mind is worried, cannot achieve atma-bodhi or self-realization ; he cannot gain knowledge of atma, not even by knowledge.

Know the soul to be sitting in a chariot, the body to be that chariot, the intellect the charioteer, and the mind to be the reins.

The flighty senses are like racehorses, and the objects of sense are the great drive or race-track. An unskilled charioteer whose reins are not held firmly, his senses are unmanageable like vicious stallions.

But a skilled driver whose mind is restrained and firmly held, his senses are under perfect control like riding-horses which are well broken in.

The man who has no understanding, is thoughtless and always impure, will never reach the world of atma. Time after time, he is born again, and has to

re-enter the mother's womb, on that weary round of births.

But he who has understanding, is thoughtful and always pure, reaches indeed the goal whence there is no return to this manifest state.

The senses are beyond the objects of sense, beyond the senses is the perceptive mind, and beyond the mind is the reflective intellect.

Beyond the intellect is ahankara or individual consciousness; beyond ahankara is purusha, the divine person, the all-knower, the great self, the mahatma. Beyond purusha there is nothing. Purusha is the goal; purusha is the destination; further no man can go.

Purusha is hidden in the cave of the heart, unseen, yet to be seen by subtle seers through their keen and subtle intellect.

Arise, arise, Nachiketas, and understand my meaning! Whose heart is set afire with truth, he burns all karma good and bad (all habits of character), his soul serene abides in the supreme!

## 9. S w e t a k e t u

The poetic glow of the Upanishad dialogues and their Socratic method of search recall Plato's dramatic colloquies. Here is a passage from the Chandogya, an earlier Upanishad.

Uddalaka addressed his son: "Swetaketu, go to school, sonnie! There is none in our family who has not studied the Vedas." So Swetaketu, at the age of twelve, went to a priestly preceptor, a guru, and received the customary Vedic instruction. When Swetaketu was 24 years old, he had studied all the Vedas, and returned home, full of conceit, and considering himself very learned and wise.

"Swetaketu," said his father, "since you are so conceited, and consider yourself very learned and wise, my dear son, have you ever enquired for that instruction by which we see what is invisible, and know what is unknowable?"

"What is that instruction, Sir?" asked Swetaketu. Uddalaka replied: "As by one clod of earth every piece of pottery is known, the difference being only in form, but in truth everything made of clay is clay;

And as by one lump of gold every golden ornament is known, the difference being only in form, but in truth everything wrought in gold is gold;

And as bees make honey by gathering the juices of different flowers and trees, and reduce them all to one form;

And as these juices have no discrimination so that they might say: I am the juice of this tree or that flower ;

In the same manner, my dear son, do all these creatures, after merging in divine essence (either in dreamless sleep or at the hour of death), forget their

previous individual state, for now they are one with the all. Everything that exists, my son, exists in that all and one. It is the True, it is atma indeed, and you, Swetaketu, are it!"

A passage in Herodotus's History (7,16) alludes to day-dreams changing to night-dreams, and paying flying visits to the illusion-wrapt sleeper. On what we dwell by day, we see in visions of the night. Hindus also regard dreams as a continuation of busy thoughts which we cannot even control in sleep. As long as the mind-lake is tossed by agitation or perturbed by dreams, the bottom of the lake, the divine essence, is not seen clearly.—

"Tat twam asi, and you, Swetaketu, are it!"

"Please, father, tell me more," said Swetaketu meekly.

"Very well, my boy!", and Uddalaka continued:

"The rivers in our beloved land flow from the mountains to the sea, eastern streams as the Ganges toward the rising sun, and western rivers as the Indus toward evening; and when they reach the sea, they become sea indeed. And as the waters of these rivers, after joining the mighty main, can no longer say: I am water belonging to this river, or I am water belonging to that,

In the same manner, my dear son, do all these creatures, after merging in the boundless ocean of



infinite love (either in dreamless sleep or at the hour of death), forget their previous individual state, for now they are one with the all.

Everything that exists, my son, exists in that all and one, it is the True, it is atma indeed, and you, Swetaketu, are it!"

" Please, father, give me further instruction."

" Go to the garden, Swetaketu, and bring a fruit of the large fig-tree."

" Here is one, Sir."

" Open it!"

" Yes, Sir, it is open."

" What do you see?"

" Seeds, very small indeed."

" Split one!"

" I have done so."

" What can you see now?"

" Nothing at all, father."

Then said Uddalaka: " That invisible life which you cannot perceive in yonder seed is nevertheless the true life of the seed, and of the juicy fruit, and of the huge fig-tree. All things are fed and nourished by that one subtle and secret life. Everything that exists, my son, exists in that all and one. It is the True, it is atma indeed, and you, Swetaketu, are it!"

## 10. C o n t r a s t s

Vedantists, just like Uddalaka, always lay stress on the oneness of life, pervading the myriads of nature's fickle forms. They neither deny the existence of matter nor the plurality of manifest life (it would be lunacy to deny such palpable and obvious facts), but what they do deny is independence of the physical universe. Matter, in their opinion, is not in a free state, but objectified by human consciousness, as red tints are projected by a ruby. Matter is limitation of mind, and has no intrinsic value, being regulated and determined by the subjective side of life. Vedanta and Sankhya are rival currents of philosophy, both emanating from the Upanishads. Vedanta declares that the material aspect of things shrinks in the same measure as mental vision expands and moral consciousness grows. Entangling matter assumes gigantic proportions before a stunted intellect or narrow sympathies.

The Sankhyas, on the other hand, affirm an endless number of individual and eternally separate souls; primal matter, co-existing with them, is likewise independent and indestructible. This potential matter, being productive of all tangible things, is termed prakriti or procreative; visible nature emanates from prakriti. All these purushas or personal souls are perfectly free until they fall from their high state of perfection, and for some fancied pleasure sell themselves into nature's bondage.

A brief philosophical rehearsal may be apposite before proceeding further. Upanishads are rhapsodic utterances, bold in speculation and fervid in aspiration. They are a broad reservoir of thought from which the two noblest streams of Indian wisdom, Vedanta and Sankhya, have drawn their inspiration. Vedanta contemplates life as a dream, and nature as a mirage; atma, the inmost self of things, is the only abiding truth. Sankhya upholds eternal mind by the side of eternal matter, purusha by the side of prakriti ; the two corresponding Vedantic terms are atma and maya. Sankhya is dwaita or dualism, whereas the doctrine that nothing exists apart from atma, that everything has its being in atma, is advaita, non-dualism or transcendental monism.

According to Sankhya, purusha or spirit is free until his entanglement with prakriti. In his downfall, purusha percolates through a succession of graded states. First of all he becomes individualized, and imagines to be separate from other consciousnesses. This individualization is called ego-making, ahankara. The next downward step after egotism is buddhi or reflection; the ego declares its independence, and is no longer identified with purusha. As the clear surface of a lake mirrors the blue skies, so pure reason reflects purusha. Lower still is manas or the mental plane which shares observation and sensation with the higher animals. The eye does not see, and the ear does not hear, but mind sees and hears. The five senses catch perceptions, and carry them inward to the mind which

is the true perceiver. A girl sits at the open window, deeply absorbed in a love story; she never hears the ugly street noises which generally grate on her ears. Yet her organs of hearing are intact; they function perfectly. The simple explanation is that her mind was not attached to the organs of sense, but intent on the reading matter. The senses are merely vehicles which retain outward impressions, and convey them to the nerve centre or mind.

Sankhya classifies our whole vital apparatus or psychological mechanism under five headings: soul, reason, mind, senses (purusha, buddhi, manas, indriyas); added to soul and his three attendants is prakriti or matter as a fifth category. Buddhist psycho-analysis is borrowed from Sankhya.

## 11. P u r u s h a   a n d   P r a k r i t i

Prakriti remains inert until purusha rouses her from dull torpor. It is the first glance of purusha or individual soul that stirs her to activity. In response she unfolds, and splits up in complementary pairs of opposites such as bright and dark, loud and low, positive and negative, productive male and receptive female. Prakriti fascinates purusha, and ensnares him in the meshes of nature's qualities. Purusha imagines that he enjoys and suffers, thinks and acts, while in reality prakriti does all this for him. Having once committed the fatal error of associating and identifying

himself with the workings of nature, purusha can no longer exercise free-will, and resembles a man who is under the temporary influence of a narcotic or hypnotic spell. Though knowing full well that he is eternally free, purusha cannot resist prakriti's charm and attractions. She paralyzes his freedom of action. Nature acts on the stage of the world; purusha is a spectator. The drama of life enlists his wrapt attention; he laughs and cries in turn. At last the hour of liberation strikes, and the knowledge comes that he is only an onlooker, in no wise mixed up with the various acts and scenes which compose the mundane spectacle. Then purusha dries his tears, and stops his merriment; quite unconcerned he leaves the divine tragi-comedy, the theatre of the world, to breathe once more the fresh and bracing air of heaven.

When discrimination, viveka, sets him free from the allurements of the temptress, fear and hope no longer sway purusha. He feels neither drawn to the things of sense nor repelled by them; he feels above them. His natural heart is broken and contrite; he has shaken off prakriti's fetters, and has mastered her finer forces.

No longer does purusha care for sense enjoyments, not even for intellectual study or the practice of psychic power. Mental gymnastics and juggling magic (maya) are but subtle manifestations of nature! Purusha has learned, and has paid dearly for the lesson, that all manifestations are finite, impermanent, defective. But imperfection must pass away, and

make room for the perfect which alone abides. Truth is lasting and unmanifest, never related to prakriti. Absolute freedom is not of this world, but dwells in pure hearts, in purusha detached from prakriti.

Nature is like a conjurer, observes a Sankhya writer, shaping one lovely sight after another before the enchanted purusha. And as a nautch-girl, a public dancer, after displaying all her evolutions and rhythmic skill, ceases to dance, so does prakriti cease to act after making herself manifest and known to the purusha's vision. As long as he fixes his enraptured gaze on her, she will dance, but no sooner are his eyes turned inward than the fetters which held him spell-bound fall off, and the dance of life is ended for ever. Instead of remaining her abject slave, nature becomes his willing handmaid, and must reveal her inmost secrets. The closing of the eyelids of the senses is like the dropping of the stage curtain.

## 12. A S a n k h y a F a b l e

The following illustration is taken from the Sankhya Sutras or psychological aphorisms.

A young prince, born under an unlucky star, was kidnaped and secretly conveyed to a remote forest where he was handed over to the care of a sabara or wild man of the woods. The rough foster-father brought him up as his own child, taught him to slay and flay the fleet mountain deer, and to raid the

straggling farmyards in the adjoining lowlands. So the lad grew up as a savage mountaineer, yet sometimes his memory would wander and contemplate, as in a magic mirror, the far-off scenes of his early childhood. The boy's untutored fancy fondly soared to noble deeds and lofty palaces.

He was as gentle  
As west winds blowing neath the violet,  
Not wagging its sweet head; and yet as  
rough,  
His royal blood stirred up, as the rude gale  
That by the top does take the mountain pine,  
And makes it stoop to the valley.

One day, a court-official, being on a circuit in an outlying hill district, happened to sight the noble-looking rustic who bore an unmistakable resemblance to the king. The old courtier at once recognized His Majesty's eldest son, and joyfully informed the prince that he was not an uncouth forester, but heir to the crown. When the youth learned from whom he sprang and breathed the vital air, the hidden spark of royalty became manifest in him, and he suddenly assumed so graceful and dignified a bearing as though he had never left his father's marble halls.

The moral which the Sankhya writer draws from the parable is that, in like manner, a man, after realizing that he is not at nature's beck and call, but ever free, though for the time at the mercy of environment and circumstance, at once recovers his true state, and

joyfully exclaims: I am a child of heaven, and not prakriti's bondman. She is bound to earth, my nature is; but I, my very self, am purusha, and soar aloft from mountain peak to mountain peak.

### 13. T w i n - B i r d s

After the Sankhya fable a Vedanta parable may not be out of place.—A Vedic folk-song, recorded 1,164, compares the inner and outer man to twin-birds on the selfsame tree. Atma is an unconcerned spectator, and the other bird a busy actor on the tree of life.

Dwa suparna sayuja sakhaya  
Two birds conjoint and knit with bonds of  
friendship  
Samanam vriksham pari-shaswajate  
On the same sheltering tree have found a  
refuge;

Tayor anyah pippalam swadu atti  
The one enjoys the sweet fruit of the  
fig-tree (pippal),  
An-asnann anyo abhi-chakasiti  
His tranquil mate looks on and is contented.

In poetic prose the Upanishads philosophize on the old Vedic text: Two birds sit on the selfsame tree, one at the top, bright-eyed and golden-hued, tranquil and blissful. But restless is the other bird, and ever hops from bough to bough, pecking at sweet and bitter



fruit. And as he eats a very bitter one, he piteously looks up, and wonderingly beholds that other bird of radiant plumage; him that is serene and unconcerned. And as he gazes on his blissful mate, a happy feeling of repose steals over the little songster. His throbbing, fluttering heart fills with sweet calm; he forgets all his little troubles and worries, as he draws nigh unto yon mystic mate. But he cannot keep still much longer, the old restlessness comes over him again; once more he hops from twig to twig, eating the sweets and bitter fruit of life.

An exceptionally trying experience comes, and in his blank dismay he nestles closer to the other bird, to the mysterious comforter who pours healing balm in the sore wound. The magic spell enchants him for a while; he then flits up and down the tree of life again, and after many an exquisite joy and sorrow draws nearer and ever nearer to the golden-winged on high, until (o joy ineffable!) he knows that he himself, his very soul, was all the time that heavenly bird, while he, the actor on the stage of life, was but the other's shadow, a fleeting image of the ever-true, a temporary copy of atma, the divine.

Two birds conjoint and knit with bonds  
 of friendship  
 On the same sheltering tree have found a  
 refuge;  
 The one enjoys the sweet fruit of the fig-tree,  
 His tranquil mate looks on and is contented.

A rough sketch of Norwegian fiords or Alpine glaciers, exhibited in a gallery, might strike a visitor's fancy, and excite a longing to visit those fairy spots, and delight in their wild beauty. Even a general view, however cursory and imperfect, of the two loftiest summits of Indian wisdom, will perchance rouse in some reader's romantic imagination a deeper interest in the sublime and bracing heights to which Hindu speculation has soared. The above is but a bare outline, hastily drawn, of Sankhya and Vedanta; both are embedded in the solid rock of Upanishad vision.

In selecting extracts from the Upanishads, the texts have been paraphrased rather than rendered literally, so that the spirit of the original may not be lost over the letter. Passages, occurring in separate texts, have been joined; others have been curtailed or enlarged to suit the purpose.

#### 14. F i r s t R e a d i n g s

If St. Paul had figuratively interpreted all the minutiae of the Mosaic law, as he did some of them, his epistles would picture the complexion of the Upanishads. Those who are altogether ignorant of the old sacrificial treatises, the Hindu Leviticus, will often find it dull and difficult to follow the line of argument adopted by the Indian forest sages who tore up the old soil, in order to scatter the new seed. They

had to pull down the stately edifice of the elaborate Vedic ritual before they could raise a nobler structure of religious realization than polytheism can offer.

As a preliminary reading, the final conversation between king Janaka and Yagnavalkya, the Indian Socrates, is recommended. The classical passage is found in the Great Jungle Upanishad, book 4, chapters 3 and 4. The whole Upanishad, the oldest, longest and most important of all, is about as large as the gospel according to St. John, together with the first epistle to the Corinthians. The philosophic kernel of the six-chaptered Upanishad is the commended central portion. After this prose passage the poetic Munda, a charming anthology of Upanishad lore, may be read with profit and pleasure; every yogi knows Munda by heart. The whole proposed reading would not be more than the joined epistles to the Galatians and Philippians.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately there is no good translation even of selected Upanishad texts. What we need is a version (critical and scholarly like Deussen's German rendering, but less ponderous) of the choicest Upanishad portions in homely English, combining the poetic fire and philosophic depth of the original Sanskrit, after the pattern of the authorized version of the Bible. Only then can the Upanishads exercise a dynamic influence on the English-speaking world, as beneficent and real as Plato's sane idealism. Only

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1. To be found in Deussen, *Geheimlehre des Veda*, 3rd edition, pages 52-68 and 182-189 (Leipzig 1909).

then will it be possible for a new saint to interweave Gospel wisdom with Vedanta, even as St. Augustine interlinked Platonism with Christian tenets in the fifth century. The twentieth with its socialistic outlook needs a different gateway to enter the city of God, and realize immortal soul. Realistic Russia, though impugning church dogma and destroying archaic creeds, is keenly alive to cooperative brotherhood and workers' needs; nascent sovietism works out its salvation and the pressing problems of downtrodden humanity more speedily and effectively than declining Anglo-Saxonism. The Upanishads foreshadow yearningly, and corroborate unwittingly, the new socialism. Yagnavalkya's cosmic consciousness, Plato's social justice, Paul's international catholicity, the renaissance fostering universal sympathies and humane pursuits, and Goethe's cosmopolitan culture are so many trails of light amid a gloomy tangle, savage and robust, wherein wayward mankind, inflicting and suffering unnumbered social wrongs, has gone astray. World-comradeship, growing from multilateral security deals to a federation of the world, breeds world-citizens, immune from racial hatred and nationalistic hysteria.

## 15. S u m m a r y

Religion begins when human nature takes an inward turn. Savages can be made happy with some gaudy finery or a few glittering trinkets. Their notion

of manhood and womanhood is quite external, and lies on the surface, in the paint of the skin or the quality of wearing material. Physical culture is a step in advance, though nerve and muscle are but a poor measure of human worth. A higher standard is intelligence, and morality is loftier still. Yet even the workings of the brain and the promptings of the heart are petty and narrow, compared to the larger and nobler vision of real man, conscious of true selfhood. He no longer identifies himself with dress or body, mind or will, but looks on all this outer appendage much as a king regards his ministers who have to conform to the royal will and pleasure. Or he resembles a play-goer who is moved to tears and laughter by the excellent stage-acting he beholds, knowing all the time that he witnesses scenes, not real, but imaginary.

Such is the general drift of ideas laid down in the Bliss portion of the Tittiri Upanishad ; the bliss of expanding consciousness is meant.

The Great Jungle, Chandogya and Tittiri are the three oldest Upanishads, all written in prose. Later poets extracted the precious ore, and with exquisite taste reset it in graceful lyrics. Katha, Sweta and Munda have always been favorite collections of Upanishad poetry. Tittiri, Russian tyetyerev, means moor-fowl or partridge; the Upanishad is variegated like that speckled bird, tinted with the thought-flashes of the tonsured mundas (mendicants), and again reacting on Munda. Katha abounds in sage instruction how to attain self-realization. Katha was compiled prior to

Munda; Sweta intervenes between the two. Poetic glow and the rush of rhythm make Sweta delightful reading, but the politic poet made concessions to sluggish empirics, and toned down the fearless monism of the Great Jungle Upanishad to a tame theistic creed. Theists assume an ever-increasing and therefore endless number of individual souls in the fold and household of God (monotheism) or gods (polytheism). Pantheists declare deity to be indwelling in nature. Monism is either rank materialism or uncompromising idealism. Both Herbert Spencer and Emerson were monists. Material monists are agnostics; they regard mind as an evolution of matter which alone exists and is real. Transcendental monists declare that God alone "is"; he is related to personal souls as oaks to their shade, or fires to their flicker.

The Upanishads have been compared to a corn-field; in order to taste the golden grain, the theology has to be threshed and sifted. Various layers of religious thought, belonging to different periods of time, are deposited in the Upanishads; their accumulated literature resembles some old dilapidated church which dates back to the Saxons. The guide tells you that the sacred edifice was raised on the site of a Roman temple, and that the plowshare has brought to light copper coins with the impress of Nero or Severus. The square tower and the octagon spire which surmounts it are well preserved, but the Saxon arch and Norman fount, both badly damaged by Cromwell's soldiers, show an overgrowth of moss and lichen. The

western wing in a rich Gothic style was added early in the fourteenth century. The projecting turrets and chaste carvings are sad torsoes, but the church was restored in the Elizabethan age, and another wing was built in the following century.

No less complex and bewildering is the religious architecture even of the early Upanishads which originated full 2500 years ago. One passage expounds that God dwells in the universe; another explains that the universe rests in him. A third that the creator is extracosmic, eternally separate from creation; again, in a later sentence, the two are identified. Generations of philosophic thought, often in direct opposition to each other, are incorporated in the Upanishads, but every page affirms the unity of hidden life-force which, time without end, permeates and energizes inert matter.

These bodies are but tents which for a space  
The One life does with royal presence grace.

The Upanishads, systematized in the Vedanta philosophy, are inspired rhapsodies, and rush forth from the depth of god-intoxicated souls like unchecked mountain torrents. Divine radiance, they declare, illumines and individualizes the manifest cosmos. The senses perceive an infinite variety of objects in quick changes and successions, but are unaware of the underlying unity. The whole creation, nonetheless, participates in the one universal life. The same breeze blows over waving fields of yellow grain, and fans the

dancing ripples of the summer sea. The same thrill of enthusiasm quickens the hearts, and brightens the faces of a packed theatre when a pathetic scene, enacted on the stage, is intently watched by the spectators. The same spirit of patriotism stirs a whole nation to unity, and the same breath of health pulsates in every life-form.

The rushing waters sparkle in glorious sunshine, but to the finite vision, gazing at the dazzling effect, the sun seems broken up in a thousand sprays of light. Each particle of organic matter beats and throbs with the quick pulse of life, but to our limited understanding the same vital current which flows through every vein and fibre of the excited universe appears divided in myriads of co-existing life-units. No mirror shows tangible objects held before it, but only their resemblance. Neither does human reflection present realities to the ego, but mere appearances of reality, thus substituting semblance for substance, the passing for the permanent, temporal for eternal values.



## VII. ORIGINS OF SANKHYA

The Sankhyas or rationalists of India were men of searching intellect. They saw the weakness of theistic arguments, and set about rationalizing them on a thoroughly empiric basis. Sankhya psychology transferred all creative force from God to nature, and thus fell in the opposite and more fatal error of atheism. But Sankhya never became depraved to the crude commercialism which is now publicly preached and practised in Christian lands. If base materialism were the final goal and highest truth, then dumb animals must live the ideal life! Dogs revel in matter, and cognize little beside it; the narrow ken of brutes hardly transcends matter. The next upward stage is assertion or denial of a creator. Here at least is a firm and decided attitude toward the unseen, but still a long way off the mark. Theist as well as atheist are dualists, and dualism is not a creed for free men, but for slaves whom desire and its twin-brother "fear" enthrall. Desireless sages alone are freemen and know no fear. They calmly contemplate the whole creation, themselves included, from an eternal angle, in God. The vast universe is imaged in their world-wide consciousness; what can they wish? what need they fear?

First comes the seed, and then the fruit; planning precedes action. Every cause takes effect;

every fact has some reason. Results are an imperative sequence. This natural law of necessity was silently recognized by Sankhya positivists, and logically worked out by Buddhism in what is known as the wheel of causation. Sankhya and Buddhism were both nurtured and bred in the same forest academies where Sweta originated. Sankhya was a robust reaction against Sweta theism and even more against the monistic ideals of the Great Jungle Upanishad. A good many technical terms which Sankhya has borrowed from the phraseology of the Opposition recur in the Buddhist scriptures. According to Sweta, nature (prakriti) is jugglery and magic (maya); the lord himself is the divine mage. The Sankhyas had no use for a personal god, and substituted soul (purusha) for the lord. Buddhism is utterly atheistic like bolshevism, and even ignores soul. Purusha and prakriti became Sankhya catchwords; maya or cosmic nescience is the watchword of Vedantists to whom essence (atma) alone is real; physical attachment or sex lure, nature's ever tempting bait, is an inherited illusion. Carnal lovers are apt to mistake manifestation and relativity for reality. The Vedantic conception is that natural man groans in maya's bonds; he hankers after wealth, and gives his strength to woman. Will-power, fortified by atmahood or the vision of unity, grows supernatural,—able to conserve and transmute virility; the fruit is prabodha or the soul's awakening to spiritual life. Maya's false promises bind and blind man; the body is mistaken

for the true, and the fugitive for the permanent (brahma).

In another Sweta verse, mortals are pronounced immortal, after finding God through deligent search (sankhya) and faithful devotion (yoga). Here the very words occur which were adopted as signals and slogans, when self-search and spiritual exercises asserted themselves as independent systems of thought.

## VIII. BUDDHISM

Buddha lived about 560-480 in the Ganges valley, south of the highlands of Nepal. He was India's foremost ethical teacher. Some ten years after his demise, Socrates, the master-moralist of Greece, was born. Aryan conduct was never left long without the personal guidance of creative genius.

Buddhism is prized for its lofty morals. But why should western folks study eastern ethics? In our complex state of society it is hard enough to live up to our own moral standard, to live the Christian life ; why then take up Buddhism? There are at least two reasons. First, about 400 millions of Asiatics are more or less swayed by Buddhist morals, and educated westerners should know something of the faith of Asia in this age of speedy aviation and close international relations. Secondly, no ethical code is absolute, but is relative to time and clime, tradition and environment. It is perfectly correct for a dissenter to eat meat on Fridays, but to a strict Catholic it is a grievous sin. And a good Buddhist regards it altogether as immoral to interfere with life wantonly, and slaughter animals. A study of comparative ethics then will broaden and liberalize our prejudiced minds ; we shall no longer giggle when we see other people follow a moral law differing from our own.

Buddha held morality in higher regard than theology, and inculcated conduct rather than dogma. He was in the first place a moralist and social reformer. The Vedic priesthood ruled with an iron rod over the people. Buddha weakened the autocratic grip of the brahmins, and relaxed the national faith in the efficacy of elaborate and expensive sacrifices, offered to fictitious gods. He attacked rigid ritualism and traditional religion, and laid stress on self-sacrifice as the noblest and simplest offering on the invisible altar of a chastened heart. Men of all classes were freely admitted to the classless Buddhist order ; the old unyielding caste system began to totter and crumble. Furthermore, Buddha rejected choice Sanskrit, the literary language of Hindustan. He preferred to preach in plain Pali, the common tongue of Kosala where once gentle Rama ruled.<sup>1</sup> Rama, the ideal knight of Aryan India, personifies pioneer-culture in the Dekhan wilds and spicy Ceylon. Pastoral Kosala, the ancient site of Oudh,

With fertile lengths of fair champaign,  
Fine flocks and herds and wealth of grain,

is located between the snowy peaks of Nepal and the sacred river Ganges.

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1. Musical Pali simplifies Sanskrit words, and often blends two consonants in one fuller sound. Karma is changed to kamma (deed, atonement) and riksha (bear) to ikko. Italian too is melodious and lazy; Victoria becomes Vittoria. Vulgar English has the same naughty, but natural tendency: gells and hosses; or twenny in U. S. A.

## 1. The Golden Mean

Buddha detested all extremes. He warned his followers not to be self-indulgent nor to mortify their senses ; not to be addicted to base propensities nor to self-torture. Self-control is the keynote of Buddhist ethics. The self-subdued are accounted worthier and more venerable than austere ascetics who

Bescorched, befrozen, lone in fearsome woods,  
Naked, without a fire, afire within,  
Struggle in awful silence toward the goal.

Song-birds steer the middle course between soaring eagles and carrion-crows. Soul-mates keep aloof from lonesomeness and turmoil, and fondly nestle together.

They should have lived together deep in  
woods,

Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were  
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes  
Called social; haunts of hate and vice and  
care.

How lonely every free-born creature broods!  
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair.  
The eagle soars alone ; the gull and crow  
Flock to their carrion just like men below.

(Byron)

At Buddha's time the Gangetic valley teemed with nihilists who scoffed at the notion of eternal soul, and

were utterly absorbed in mundane affairs. On the other hand, eternalists were always airing the here-after, and sadly neglected the pressing duties of the present. Buddha exhorted to keep the golden mean. Be neither eternalist nor nihilist, neither astika nor nastika! neither a dreamer nor a doubter. Visionaries make light of the indispensable necessities in this shadow-world, and are idling in the clouds ; sneering sceptics deride immortality as a priestly fiction. By all means, recognize individuality for the time being as real, if you find that attitude helpful; do not ignore fair fleeting appearances! After all, they mirror the unknown truth, and are a reverberation from the other shore ; not even the basest life-forms are worthless nonentities. It is best for you, altogether to avoid barren arguments about personality and soul ; not to concern yourself with vain metaphysical speculation, but rather to follow the moral law (dharma ; Pali dhamma). Clean conduct is the " middle path " (madhyamika). Morality slays the demon-brood of vicious passion and selfish attachment. Die to self and sin, sweep away delusion and desire, and you are in nirvana (Pali nibbano).

As in the day of first creation,  
 The azure skies are calm again,  
 As though the world knew no privation,  
 And anguished hearts did not know pain.  
 For love and fame my craving passes ;  
 Mid silence of the fields at morn

I breathe as breathe these very grasses.  
 On days agone and days unborn  
 I would not waste a thought nor wonder.  
 This only do I feel once more:  
 What gladness, ne'er again to ponder!  
 What bliss to know: all yearning's o'er!  
 (Mereshkovski)

Nirvana is a state of grace where the hell-fire of selfish and violent yearning is "blown out" (nir-vana).

## 2. E t h i c s

Ahinsa or harmlessness is a test of self-discipline, and the central doctrine of Buddhist morals. In ancient texts hinsa, etymologically related to offense, denotes physical injury done with evil intent, but the meaning of the vocable has been stretched to harm and hurt, not only by deed, but by word or thought. Native pundits who denounce any meddling with individual liberty as inhumane are responsible for the new rendering of ahinsa as non-interference. Slavery is inconsistent with the dictates of humanity; one of Gandhi's followers actually praised Lincoln as the national defender of American ahinsa. Non-interference is the cardinal law of an ideal society. How smooth and delightful social life would run if we only kept our hands off other people's concern. Bodily injury is bad enough; mental meddling, to



have one's feelings hurt, one's beliefs hit, is even more insufferable to sensitive and refined minds. Time and again we are told: you must read this book, you must see that play, you must meet so and so! All that is interference. Each of us evolves along individual lines, marked by an ingrained bent; we are justified and compelled to follow our personal tastes. Unnecessary interference is terribly selfish and narrow-minded; meddling people want everybody to act, speak, think and believe exactly as they do. If that could be done, life would be utterly boresome, monotonous and unbearable. Nature's charm is multiplicity, and not uniformity. Variety in unity, dancing wavelets on an infinite sea, is her eternal law and pleasure.

The doctrine of ahinsa, in the modern sense of the word, has also a national aspect. Gandhi (born 1869) is not the first Indian to offer passive resistance to coercion enforced by foreign rule. Long before the British occupation, Alexander's legions thundered across Hindustan, but non-violence, impervious to force, disarmed the invincible war-lord. Some of the Greek governors, lieutenants and soldiers who after his departure were stationed in the Punjab and Afghanistan, fell victims to native ahinsa, and became ardent converts to the lure of Buddhist ethics.

The east bowed low before the blast  
In patient deep disdain,

She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.

Ahinsa certainly eased the Moslem conquest; Kashmir opposition was half-hearted and negligible. Hindus bowed before the boastful blast, and resigned themselves to fate. They would neither co-operate with the alien aggressor nor offer violence to arrogant hinsa.

Scholars, inclined to read modern ideas into ancient texts, trace the notion of non-violent resistance to militant force back to the Upanishads from which Buddhism and Vedanta are derived, these two superb lifts offered to struggling and striving humanity. Both gardens of the soul are like a bewildering maze, full of intricate windings where novices to eastern thought can easily lose themselves. The sweetest flowers have been culled in popular anthologies of song: Buddhist conduct in the Pali Words on Duty (dhamma-pada), and Vedic wisdom in the Sanskrit Gita or Song of Destiny. Subjoined are half a dozen moral sayings, picked at random from the Dhammapada, and rendered freely:

- 1 As a bee sips nectar from many flowers without injuring their color, shape or scent, so the good enjoy society without doing harm (hinsa).—Gandhi might translate: without interfering by thought, word or action.

- 2 The perfume of a sweet disposition surpasses the fragrance of lotus buds and sandal wood.
- 3 We are all foolish, but here is the difference: whereas a conceited man fancies himself wise, the truly wise know their inbred folly perfectly well.—Socrates might well have uttered these words. The sophists in Athens thought themselves wonderful and wise, but he, knowing his inherent limitations, was wiser than all the foreign professors.
- 4 Winds never shake a solid rock, nor does a well-balanced mind falter amid flattery or abuse.—Equipoise is the golden mean.
- 5 Would you be perfect, choose fair means for your success!—Dishonesty never pays in the long run, but spells moral shipwreck; so does all falsehood, slander, graft and bluff.
- 6 Better conquer yourself than a thousand foes. No power on earth can defeat the power of self-control.

Many other helpful sayings are strewn along the path of dhamma or moral duty. The Pali word dhamma literally means "holding on" to one's highest ideal; never sacrificing loftier to lower duties. Hindus have always recognized the relativity of morals.

In the third century B. C., Asoka was emperor of India. This model Buddhist had the dhamma or moral law engraven on many rock-pillars for the edification of the faithful. One of the imperial stone-scripts enjoins religious tolerance ; others commend humility, spiritual charity, and kindness to animals. The following rock readings, again paraphrased, disclose Asoka as a broad-visioned and big-hearted ruler:

- 1 Follow the moral law according to your creed, but never disparage other sects to the greater glory of your own.
- 2 Constant self-search and self-control will show you how imperfect you are, and expose your natural corruption. Then you will no longer gloat over the few good actions you have done.
- 3 Idle arguments about what is to become of us when we die, craving after occult experience and psychic power,—all that betrays a little mind, and stunts spiritual growth instead of promoting it. Innocence, truthfulness and compassion give insight in the secret springs of life, in life's hidden meaning. Asoka called this clean vision of the essence of things " gift of the eye," chakkhu-dan.

- 4 It is excellent to be generous and liberal, but there is no greater gift than aiding others to obey the moral law.
- 5 What is the most meritorious rite? There is no grander ceremonial than kindness and respect for the sanctity of life.
- 6 Do not injure living being ; injuries received bear patiently!

### 3. P s y c h o l o g y

Buddhism teaches ethics by the side of psychology on the ground that every action, moral or wicked, leaves an impression on the mind ; this invisible stamp determines all our sadness and gladness, gloomy and merry moods. An uncontrollable outburst of anger is indelibly imprinted on the brain long after the brain-storm is over, thus weakening the power of resistance when the next temptation arises. Again, a noble impulse or generous thought impresses itself subtly and silently on the subconscious mind, waiting for an opportunity to spring into renewed manifestation. Buddhism explains: cause and effect govern inexorably our daily life! You imagine you are a free agent ; as a matter of fact, you are bound hand and foot by your past actions. When evil impressions or tendencies preponderate in your mind-stuff (chitta),

evil your life will be ; where good imprints prevail, the result must be a fine and moral conduct.

Suppose, death intervenes before some of these dormant seeds have a chance to grow and develop to deserved honor or shame ; what then? Suppose, a gifted young sculptor has been killed in the war before he could unfold his latent artistic possibilities. What becomes of all that unused talent? A Buddhist would give a figurative rather than direct answer. Cut the roses of a bush, he might say ; the vital sap remains in that stripped rosebush, and in due season the potential vitality is sure to burst forth in rejuvenated bloom.—Conservation of energy is a general law in the natural world ; not only in the physical order of things, but even more in the mental and moral domain. Slumbering energies, inbred characteristics, some time or other, will force themselves to conscious manifestation. The influence exercised by desire, actual as well as repressed longings, is the mystic link between successive lives. Present desires are the seed of future fulfilment.<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4. P r e - e x i s t e n c e

If I really lived before my birth, how is it that I have entirely forgotten my pre-natal state, and cannot

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1. In the Hindu belief, discarnate spirits, being tormented and dictated by dormant desires, are more helpless than in the embodied state.

remember a single event out of my past life? Buddhism replies to this perfectly natural question: You are not even conscious of what you did when you were a baby ; how then can you expect to recollect a still more remote period? You do not remember all the chequered experiences you have gained through this present individuality ; can you wonder that you are forgetful of former existences?

The jubilant exuberance of poets is never without a touch of sadness, because souls aflame with heavenly fire seem to recollect their divine origin, and intuitively mourn over human limitations.

From an infinitely distant land  
Come airs and floating echoes that convey  
A melancholy into all our day.

Before the master attained self-realization, and fully awoke from the dreamlife of the senses, he had existed through æons, according to a sacred legend; latterly as an embryonic saviour or Buddha-to-be (bodhisatta). His last life on earth covered eighty years. During this final pilgrimage, the doors opened at last, and showed all the chambers through which his weary feet had wandered. All past experiences were unraveled, all pre-existences were revealed to the inner vision; Buddha beheld a vast vista of the past as in a magic crystal. Long-vanished ages unrolled before his spiritual eye when he was born for the last time, about B. C. 560, as a full-fledged Buddha. The

awakened one (that's what buddha means) told all his remembered births and imperfect lives to loving disciples who memorized the Jatakas or Birth Tales, and transmitted them orally for the benefit of future generations. A thousand years later, the Jatakas, embellished with loads of finished fiction and ornate romance, were committed to writing. They are enshrined in the Buddhist Bible casket, and belong to the oldest Aryan folklore. Many an enchanting romance in the Arabian Nights can be traced back to the Pali birth stories.

But as a rule, Buddha was reluctant to speak on topics, unprovable and unprofitable, which might engage immature listeners in idle argument. The ever-present Now is more dynamic than the buried Yesterday.

Let the lifeless body rest!  
 He is gone who was its guest;  
 Gone as travelers haste to leave  
 A wayside inn, nor wait till eve.

Traveler, in what realms afar,  
 In what planet, in what star,  
 In what vast aerial space  
 Shines the light upon your face?  
 In what gardens of delight  
 Rest your weary feet tonight?

(New York Times)



## 5. Individuality

No sooner was Alexander's empire consolidated than the unwieldy and polyglot colossus collapsed. Adventurous leaders of Greek bands, sometimes highly polished like king Menander, more often ill-bred upstarts, founded independent states in inner Asia. Menander governed the vast dominion of Balkh 160-130. The foreign outpost extended from the Oxus beyond the Hindukush over Gandhara-land which comprised the Kabul valley and the Punjab. The royal carrier of Hellenic culture in this important Greek dependency where east and west met grew deeply interested in Buddhist psychology. Whenever Menander reflected on the possibility of reincarnation, he utterly resented the prospect of having to lose, at the time of rebirth, his individuality which he had cultivated so diligently. The problem puzzled and perplexed his alert mind, since all men crave for individual existence. Does personality persist after death? the illustrious ruler, time and again, would ask himself. In this perturbed frame of mind, the king drove one day to a learned Buddhist monastery just outside the city, and consulted the reverend father Nagasena, superior of the Buddhist order in Bactria (Balkh), on reincarnation and retention of personality. Menander enquired: "When I die, must I lose my individuality? If I am born again, is my person to be radically different from what it is now?" The priest answered riddling in a parable: "A light,

lit from another light, need not quench the original flame."

Did Nagasena refer to the heredity of moral and mental qualities, or did he mean to rebuke the king? Did he wish to imply that metaphysical speculation is idle and ignoble in a ruler of multitudes? that it is manlier to strive for moral excellence, and purge one's pride by constant self-examination?

The king: "If I have to lose my individuality, give up my very self, what's the use of being so very good and conscientious?" The priest: "To lose one's individuality, one's inmost self, means to become selfless, and unselfishness is never a loss, but always a gain."

Your Reverence, is individuality perception  
and reflection?

No!

Is it disposition and consciousness?

No!

Perhaps all four together?

Oh, no! let me ask Your Majesty a question.

You came here in your car, I understand?

Yes, Your Reverence.

Do the wheels and the pole constitute the  
car?

No!

Or the body of the car and the yoke?

Oh, no!

Perhaps all four together?

How can Your Reverence ask such a question?  
 CAR is merely a convenient term to designate  
 wheels, pole, body, yoke, and so on.

And INDIVIDUALITY, said the priest, is but a convenient term to designate perception, reflection, disposition, consciousness, and what else may work silently and subconsciously in our complex minds. Your car is a grouping and make-up of various materials, and your individuality is an aggregate of mental and moral qualities. Car and individuality are both compounds which, sooner or later, must break up into their elements. Sire, let us get out of the rigmarole of words. Why do you waste your precious time with barren thoughts and fruitless arguments on individuality? Take the good ship Dhamma, the "moral law," and cross the stormy sea of suffering and sorrow, for of such every individuality is made up, and sail over to nirvana's blessed shore. Nirvana is the dying to delusion and desire.

Menander's Athenian namesake flourished B.C. 300, and wrote superb character plays; his tragicomedies affected strongly, though not directly. Shakespeare and Moliere. A sentence, uttered by one of Menander's dramatic characters, dovetails with Nagasena's viewpoint. "In silence God brings all to pass." The above conversation between priest and king is not a literal rendering, but a free recast from the original Pali.

Lovers forget themselves, and are lost in each other. Devotees merge individual limitations ever more in the beloved to whom they are attuned as the breath of the lungs is to the surrounding air; they regain a hundredfold what they have lost; theirs is the infinite. Mrs. Montgomery has well expressed this "service to humanity":

Lie closer to my heart, my little one!  
 You are the word that links the silent past  
 With the unspoken future; binds them fast  
 In one! The word, and I have spoken it!  
 Here is the image stamped upon the clay,  
 And in the fashioning I have a part.  
 Here is the heritage of all that was,  
 And I have passed it on. Here is the seed  
 Of all that will be: I have sowed it here  
 In the wide garden of infinity!  
 Here is the torch to light eternity;  
 Oh awesome thought, that I have lighted it!  
 Oh small dear son, your greatness frightens  
 me.

What was my life, can never be again;  
 For I was born too, born anew in pain.  
 I am no longer individual,  
 But ever one with all created things,  
 Bound up with earth and all earthly affairs.  
 There is no joy in which I do not share;  
 No shame or sorrow now can leave me free.  
 Oh son of mine, you link my heart to life!

I laugh to think of all the little things  
That pleased me, very dear, before you  
came.

Your lips here at my breast make me forget  
The futile tasks that busied me before.

Now I am servant to humanity!

## 6. Early Buddhism

Italian is clipt Latin, and Pali, brimful of colloquialisms and slang, is worn-off Sanskrit. On slipshod lips gentleman sounds like gennelman; in a similar careless and idle mood the Pali tongue pronounced the Sanskrit word *sutra* like *sutta*, and *dharma* like *dhamma*.

Through psycho-analysis (*sankhya*) the Indian mind attained self-knowledge (*yoga*) which yokes and controls all actions. The daring speculation and picturesque diction of the Upanishads survived in *sutras* or set sentences; these stock phrases were current in Sanskrit-speaking *asrams* or seminary-retreats, conducted by learned brahmins. The *Sankhyas* believed in immortal soul; the *yoga* system added oversoul or God. Buddha rejected both God and soul, but adopted the technical terminology of *sankhya-yoga*. The Kosala reformer coined no new phraseology, but poured old wine into new vessels, as he enlarged the traditional *sutras* in popular *suttas*. The Pali canon of the Buddhists is treasured in three

caskets or baskets. The first basket contains spiritual exercises and rules of monastic discipline. The second deals with dhamma or moral law, and is the most vital and central portion of the scriptural triplet. Non-injury is the keynote ; never thinking of hurting even one's worst enemy; refusing to brood over injuries received. The dhamma-casket holds sparkling jewels like the Dhammapada and the Jatakas, but its most precious gems are the master's precepts on faith and morals. His suttas or sayings are strung together in suttantas, and these dialogues of the Buddha are the quintessence of early Buddhism. They ignore the personality of God, but are the superb effort of a godman; a self-effulgent supersoul reaches out a helping hand, to lift his lesser brethren who still grope in darkness.

The dialogues affirm that desire for life generates life, and that self-assertion, the offspring of desire, brings sorrow. Existence is painful and fugitive; grief, inherent in life, is cured by self-denial. Do personal feelings perish with the body, or persist after death? Buddha paid scant attention to the problem of personal immortality, but recognized continuity of consciousness. Suttantists who flourished in the beginning of our era explained, somewhat like Menander's priestly interlocutor, that consciousness is a compound, unfolding like a reel of successive impressions, or a series of mental images. This romantic school of Buddhism looked on visible objects as momentary projections of the subjective mind; for

this reason the pictorial display of fancy-bred phenomena cannot take the same aspect in two brains. As the pressure of one scale determines the balancing weights to be laid in the other, so a dying man's last thoughts flavor and perfume his new consciousness, and seriously affect the conditions of his rebirth. Such fanciful doctrines stamped Suttantists as heretics, but they regarded themselves as advanced Buddhists. Neo-Buddhists, as Suttantists are sometimes called, had a genius to reconcile tradition and innovation, and to adapt their pliant theology to the most different temperaments and environments. Early Buddhism, on the other hand, was cast in rigid and logical forms of faith ; scholasticism became the fashion among the basket-weavers. The moral law was not enough ; doctrinal addenda show the historic development of the Pali dogma. An academic superdoctrine (abhidhamma) forms the third and final portion of the triple basket, and is particularly cultivated in the Far East. Countless are the scholastic commentaries still written on the suttantas.

## 7. The New Theology

The East-Aryans were once disseminated over Iran, and roamed from Balkh along the Elburz slopes to Armenia where they came in contact with Semitic thought. Like their West-Aryan kinsmen in Greece, Rome, Germany and Russia, the Asiatic Aryans were

### III

herdsmen and hunters, practising heathen rites and nature-magic. They sacrificed to fancied gods, genii, ghosts and goblins. With prayer and enchantment the Indo-Iranians propitiated sun and soil, wind and waves, the elements of nature, both dread and benign. In Iran, a young and sturdy race of farmers was produced from the nomadic egg; the Hindu ancestry remained rovers and looters. The science of Babylon and the faith of Israel affected Iranian paganism which began to view the cosmos and its master-builder with more sober restraint than Rig and Atharva polytheism. Astronomy was eagerly studied south of the Caspian Lake and in the Oxus valley. Jahve was renamed Mazda; monotheism was established. Mazdaists abominated the plurality of Vedic gods, and re-consecrated the pure flame in which the lord had appeared unto Moses. Parsis still pray before the fire; the sacred symbol signifies the creator's brightest thought and creative word when he uttered and called forth creation. The spread of Mazdaism resulted in a racial rift; the East-Aryan unity split in the forebears of Persians and Hindus. The sons of Indra spoke Sanskrit, and trekked from Iran to India. Mazdaist speech was Avestic, a dialectic variety of Sanskrit, and the mother-tongue of Persian. But even the great schism could not altogether rend the common faith of Iran and India; Indo-Iranians preserved Arctic reminiscences, and held the anterior cult of the polar fire or northern light in common. Parsis believe in one god, and call themselves fire-devotees;



"fire-worshiper" is an affront and misnomer for which Thomas Moore is responsible.

The Mazdaist Bible is the Avesta; the most sacred portions are fathered on Zarathushtra, the holy prophet of Mazda.<sup>1</sup> Legendary Vedic lore abundantly recurs in the Avesta, and Hinduism is certainly familiar with the Iranian fire-cult. The Oxus movement, affirming the dignity of lofty morals and monotheism, was re-enacted in the Ganges valley about B.C. 300. The leading character in the Gita portion of the great Hindu epic came to be adored as a golden sunray in human form: lord Krishna was believed to have descended from his father's celestial abode, in order to lead pleasure-tipsy and topsyturvy India once more along the narrow path of faith and duty to the realms of peace. The Lay of Krishna or Song of Destiny, the holiest book of the Krishnaists, was first drafted in the second century B.C. Atheists attacked, and polytheists overthrew, the exclusive sun-cult constantly, but each time Krishnaism reasserted its cleaner creed and conduct. It was the theism of the Gita which transformed agnostic Buddhism to the new theology in the beginning of our era. Worship of a personal god strongly appeals to the human craving for love and service. Humble prayer and dependence on the lord engender self-restraint; the control of the mind-enslaving senses brings self-

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1. The Greek pronunciation was Zoroaster; modern Persians say "Zerdosht."

realization which shatters delusion and lawless desire. Buddha ignored deity, but the theistic texts of Neo-Buddhism deify him as another incarnation of the sun, and make a god of Buddha. Sweeter than fragrant incense or lotus scent, runs a Sanskrit line, is his consoling message. Tibetan lamas and Japanese bonzes glorify the adorable lotus-holder as an exemplar and embodiment of Love Divine. Whenever this dark earth needs a saviour, angelic messengers, enthroned in a radiant lotus, come forth from the im-measurable (a-mita) ocean of infinite light and love. Amita, light eternal, emits bodhisatta-rays. Buddha himself is Amita, the central sun of the universal order, the chakravarti who turns the wheel of the seasons; his followers, the bodhisattas or Buddhas-to-be, are rays of the lord of nirvana. Buddha and his galaxy, or to speak in abstract terms, the boundless (amita) and the finite, differ in degree, but conform in essence.

The Song of Krishna and Neo-Buddhist teachings are both penned in Sanskrit, and run along similar doctrinal lines. Life's gay and gloomy show, its mad pranks, poisons and passions, are noisy bubbles on the unruffled deep; the soul is firmly anchored in God. The cardinal doctrine is the "wheel of causation." Life means more than an accident d'amour; the busy world is a moral necessity! Both scriptures praise the calm dispassion of the ruling oversoul beneath the wild excitement of vanity fair. Selfishness covers the god-illumined soul with

nescience, dull and blind; mortal mind and sorry semblance veil the abiding reality of things. Buddha denied that, in the quest of nirvana, disinterested action is inferior to the contemplative life. We generally act from sheer self-interest, are aimless, unmanly and forlorn. But the duteous

Greet the unseen with a cheer,  
Never doubt that clouds will break,  
Never dream, though right were worsted,  
          wrong would triumph;  
Hold, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight  
          better, sleep to wake.

Action, done for duty's sake, and not merely for private advancement, gives discernment between the unseen and apparent, the real and visible. Both Gita and the new theology stress the efficacy of faith rather than good works. A man who dies, believing in Amita or in Krishna, will pass to the happy land, the isles of the blessed. Without that infinite light, wherein gods and worlds repose, all finite luminaries, the lustrous stars, bright minds and brilliant beauty, would grow dim and dark in a moment, and crumble to nothingness and ashes. Devout Krishnaists as well as Neo-Buddhists reject the vain pursuit of wealth and pleasure for self-surrender to the chosen ideal, and commend as an aid in pious exercises the use of holy images.

The early Buddhists, engrossed by exclusive

self-culture, strove for individual perfection and riddance of personal rebirth. The elders yearned for a tranquil and saintly life, and were serenely sheltered in secluded cloisters. Their conservative creed hardened to a rigid monasticism, but served as a springboard for the new theology which switched itself on to the warmer and broader current of Sanskrit tradition. Bubbling over with sacrificial love and artistic emotion, abounding in a rich and rhythmic ritual, charitably disposed unto extravagance, favoring poetry and painting, music and the stage, for religious propaganda, and progressing apace with the age, the Neo-Buddhists left the old theology far behind. They coveted vicarious suffering, and longed to atone for the sins and sorrows of their fellow-men. "Would you be saved, have faith in Amita! who knows, one day he may select you as a bodhisatta or chosen vessel." Pali Buddhism gript Ceylon, Siam, Burma, and by the side of her advanced Sanskrit sister entered the soul of Eastern Turkestan and China proper. But the new theology, being more altruistic and temperamental, celebrated triumphs in Nepal, Tibet and the Far East. Neo-Buddhism also conquered Java and Sumatra; the twin-isles have always been responsive to the cultural call of Aryan India.

#### 8. T a t a r a n d R e d s k i n

Germans speak of wander-lust as an inbred Nordic quality. But the migratory instinct is far more

general, and largely due to congested conditions; overcrowded pastures blasted Aryan unity, and tribal splinters flew east and west. The clansmen who stayed behind in Pontic tracts were known as Scythians or Sakas, but these expert bowmen and rough-riders were by no means stationary. It is a romantic conjecture that in remote antiquity wild Scythian flocks crossed the southern mountains for the fertile riverland, hemmed in by Bagdad, Babel and Basra, infusing a nobler Aryan strain into aboriginal life, and helping to mold "Sumerian culture." Before Abraham's ancestry settled on the banks of the Euphrates, Sumerian bands, not only of rovers and robbers, but of craftsmen and city-builders, had reached Afghanistan; in the Indus valley they pioneered a higher civilization. The first Scythian invasion of India was not altogether peaceful. Clashes with the aborigines and intertribal forays among the intruders are narrated in the Rig Veda. Shah Darius, the Parthian nobility, and Buddha's ancient household prided themselves on their Scythian origin. Saka Lion and Saka Sage were titles held by the founder of Buddhism.

After Alexander's death in Babylon, B.C. 323, a dust-cloud of Scythian horsemen swept, conquest-bound, over Turkestan, and reached the knee of the Yellow River. A savage host of Huns repulsed the daring raiders, and drove them north-west across the desert to Zungaria near the Soviet border. The Scythians, though diminished in numbers, remained

a force to be reckoned with. They dispersed along the trade route running north of the Thian Shan mountains, and west to the Oxus valley. Kurgans or burial mounds, resembling the Crimean tombs of Scythian kings, still plant the old caravan road. The universal dread, caused by the sudden inroads and violent assaults of the fierce Scythians, is sufficiently indicated by the variety of names given them all over Asia. In Kashmir they were feared as Kushans, in Turkestan as Tokhars, and Yue Che is the Chinese name for Scythian.

These white eagles of the steppe loved freedom and led a migrant life. The blood of Tatar chiefs tingled in their veins, but their speech was Aryan. From Saka stock came lord Buddha and many a Bengal grandee such as Naren's grandfather. That wealthy kshatriya or warrior of noble lineage renounced, at the age of 25, fortune, family and princely prospects. He retired to the solitude of the aranya about the middle of last century, and was never heard of any more. The grandson, a young lion of manly beauty and untried strength, became the most dynamic of Ramakrishna's spiritual sons. Naren's friend and follower, the maharaja of Khetri, addressed him as Vivekananda which signifies joy of discrimination. The young sannyasi who mobilized all India under the adwaita banner proved by his bold plan of campaign that he could discriminate between primary or essential aims and secondary purposes. Naren

scented reality in appearances; he visualized sat in asat.

Along social and political lines, Lenin exercised the same clear discernment and subtle discretion. The prince of proletarianism had a commanding forehead, but slit eyes, while Vivekananda was kamalaksha or lotus-eyed. Tatar ties of consanguinity, however distant, intertwined the two titans of thought; their powerful jaws looked Mongolian rather than Aryan. Vivekananda prized his kinship to the vagrant sons of Chenghiz Khan. Redskins whose high cheek-bones also point to Tatar parentage are dying out fast in the western hemisphere. They are endowed with a keener sense of right and wrong, sat and asat, than the white man who betrayed them to the inroads of civilized exploitation. There are further points of comparison with the Hindus, even more concrete and striking. The vasishtas, pristine vasanta-celebrants and sun-sacrificers, wore their hair in a braid on the right side (dakshinatas-kaparda). American "Indians" had their heads clean-shaven like mundaka-monks, save for a small tuft (Sanskrit chuda) of hair on the crown from which three bright feathers of an eagle's wing, like slanting sunrays, dangled over the left ear and shoulder. The display of war-paint was as gaudy and ostentatious as among the ancient Britons whose Latin name "Pict" designates "tattooed." The red-man's ritual bears startling Vedic resemblances. Solemn dirges, chanted in memory of deceased chieftains, share oratorical embellishment with Sanskrit songs for the

dead. From the extremes of Asia the scalp-flayers and deer-slayers brought with them alankara or ornate rhetoric which links the archaic traditions of two worlds. The vocabulary of the redskins is sententious and allegorical, rich and full, like Bhavabhuti's diction. The colorful word-imagery is delicately shaded by the inflection of a deep and vibrating voice which transitions of mood quickly change from soft and melodious notes to harsh and gurgling discords.

There is nothing heroic or creative about the race of Shylock, yet the denationalized and disenfranchized Jews are the yeast in the German bread. Vivekananda once remarked that the Tatar is the wine in the Hindu race. He certainly is the cream in the Slavic milk. Some of the earliest rishis and rig-chanters bore Tatar names.<sup>1</sup> Akbar (1556-1605), the most eminent Tatar khan on Delhi's peacock throne, convened a samaj or parliament of religions to restore unity in a land divided against itself by warring castes and creeds. The great emperor was urged to reconcile the rival beliefs of his many-religioned subjects:

The vot'ries of the prophet's faith  
Of whom you are the crown and chief;  
And they who wear on Vedic brows  
The mystic symbols of belief,

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1. The rishis or wise men of Sveta-dwipa charted the glittering heavens; pivot and centre on the star-maps was the Great Bear (riksha; Greek arktos). These Arctic records and visions are preserved in the Rig Veda.



And they who worshipping the sun  
 Fled o'er the old Iranian sea;  
 And they who bow to him who trod  
 The midnight waves of Galilee.

(Mrs. Naidu)

Akbar's samaj agreed to a kind of eclectic rationalism which was to become the state-sanctioned faith of the mighty Mogul empire. The Indo-European chronicle is most chequered and exciting; its first and last chapter are Vedic India and Soviet Russia respectively. These stirring Aryan annals do not only record individual hero-deeds, but also cultural movements culminating in samyag-darsana, a vision of humanity. Aryans were no longer nomads, but settlers, and as such prone to aggressive patriotism, first tribal, then national and imperial. They borrowed the crude beginnings of a primitive universalism from Ural-Altaic hunters and horsemen whose roving and untamed spirit always disdained adhesion to the clod and stationary modes of life.

## 9. Greco - Indian Art

The yellow race made history prior to the Caucasians, and again the Jews prior to the gentiles. Semitic capitalism preceded Aryan colonialism. Before either exploiter appeared on the arena, Ural-Altaic nomads, both Finns and Mongols, rode and roamed

over Asian soil. Finnish kinsmen are Basques, medieval Huns and the still anterior Picts. Hunnish blood flows in the veins of the dashing Magyars, the gallant cavaliers of Hungary.

The most vital sap in the Mongolian stock which includes Tatars and Turks are the Chinese whose civilization antedates Aryanism. Greek traces are unmistakable in Chinese art. Hellenistic, the blossom of Alexandrian culture, is earlier than Byzantine, and later than classical Greek. Generalization characterizes the portraits modeled by Greek sculptors in the fourth century B.C. When Alexander conquered the east, the artistic horizon widened, and paid marked attention to the individual. Two Hellenistic figures, of a stoic and satyr, may serve as an illustration. There is a flow and freshness about the statuette of the stoic who taught philosophic poise a generation after Alexander ; the suggestive pose, indicated by the wavy drapery, suits the calm physiognomy of the philosopher. His lofty personality is revealed in the whole bearing of the body. The satyr plays a double flute. His swollen cheeks; puckered lips and contracted brow are realistically rendered ; deep shadows are cast by irregular tufts of hair. Individualization, after the Greek pattern, was studied in the Far East during the art-loving Han dynasty.

Hellenism and Hinduism met in Gandhara where Menander, the royal student of Buddhist psychology, held sway until B.C. 130. Soon after his demise, the

Scythians in Iran, who had long rallied from the Chinese disaster, overran Gandhara, the land between Kandahar, Kabul and Lahore, and ended Greek rule in those parts forever. The invaders were joined by kindred swarms, the dread Parthian archers of whom even Rome stood in mortal terror. The Scythians, though rude and lacking polish, were responsive to Hellenic art, and employed it for the advance of Buddhism which they readily adopted. Were they not of the same flesh and blood as Buddha himself, the Saka sage and Scythian lion? The new lords of Gandhara resided at Peshawar near the confluence of the rivers Kabul and Indus. Many a Buddhist temple arose in the old border fortress; the sacred statuary has a distinct Greek tone and touch. A sunshade, spread over an empty throne as an emblem of royal dignity, formerly indicated the unseen presence of Buddha, but now the Saka lion was modeled like a god of wine and song, an Indian Bacchus or Apollo. Gandhara sculpture, a Greco-Indian fusion, was to give a new impulse to the Chinese brush and chisel. Kashmir, Tibet, Hindustan, Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea could be reached by boat from Peshawar which was a busy transit station for Chinese silks. The Silk Road ran from the Yellow River along grotto-temples to Eastern Turkestan; at Turfan the shining bales were transhipped through the Tarim valley on to Yarkand and Peshawar, the western terminus of the Chinese route. The silk was expedited to Beirut

and Alexandria, to be dyed, re-woven and sent back with a western trade-mark.<sup>1</sup>

Numbers of Indo-Scythians were converts to Neo-Buddhism ; the new theologians must have been suasive propagandists. The Saka kings wanted to annex Persia and the whole of Central Asia ; the pushing missionary faith aided their political ambition. Kanishka ruled in Kashmir 78-123. He bore a Turkish name, but was a Scythian, either a Kushan or Tokhar. It suited Kanishka's plans to establish the new theology as a state religion in the Indo-Scythian empire ; two hundred years later, kaiser Constantine backed another winning horse when he sanctioned the Christian church, and legalized its services. Kanishka convened a Buddhist council, and Dr. Aswaghosha, the moving spirit at the conventicle, first formulated the new theology in conformity with the teachings of suddantism and the Song of Krishna. Neo-Buddhism spread its wings and flew, together with the Saka flag and Gandhara sculpture, along the silk road to Eastern Turkestan. Wall-paintings in the temple ruins of Turfan disclose the Aryan build and mien of the blue-eyed, yellow-haired Tokhars who were of Indo-Scythian ancestry, and Neo-Buddhists by faith. Turfan's monastic libraries have yielded fragments of Sanskrit plays, penned by Aswaghosha in honor of the Buddha. From Turfan

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1. The author visited Peshawar and ancient Gandhara-land, retracing part of Alexander's ancient march-route.

the heart of China is easily accessible. Greco-Indian art originated in Gandhara, and fructified the rigid technique of Chinese painters ; they learned to portray the very soul of things with a few bold and dainty touches. Imbued with the Greek vision of beauty, the wondrous artists of the Far East surpassed their Aryan masters whom they never copied slavishly. Chinese genius creates independently along national traditions.

## 10. B u d d h i s t S c i e n c e

Stratosphere aeronauts are impressed with the unity of the universe, as they gaze from dazzling altitudes at the starry expanse, with a blazing sun overhead. In a flash of realism, the span of space dissipates to a mirage, suspended in the air. The blue vault of heaven is but an optical delusion ; the trick is done with myriads of minute mirrors of dust and cloud. The gossamer web of space and the tissues of time are both fancy-woven. As sunsets are not the sun, but his image and reflection, so time is but imaginary, projected by the magic of the mind. The historic drama, packed with grim actualities and romantic films, is lifelike as a vivid dream. Arctic explorers, encased in the perpetual night of a polar winter, live as much today as at the dawn of Christianity or in the age of stone. Life is a rapid succession of elusive events. The very skies looked different to soldiers fighting at Waterloo, or Bunker Hill, or

Trafalgar. A planetarium actually turns the clock backward, and projects celestial orbits and conjunctions as they appeared to bygone generations. Aswaghosha knew neither stratosphere nor planetarium, but keenly felt the unreality of space and time.

In their eagerness to stem the swelling tide of materialism, the new theologians allowed the doctrinal pendulum to swing to an extreme idealism. They regarded visible objects as visionary and unreal. Aswaghosha went even further, and declared that individual consciousness, the source of all things, is illusory, null and void. As a crystal catches the reflection of a bluebell or red rose, he argued, so the mind is colored and overlaid with mental images. All sorts of imaginings cover pure intelligence. This brain-cloud produces the variety of mundane appearances; a whole crowd of ill-assorted phenomena makes up the cosmic cinema or moving panorama of the showy world. Tangible objects can no more be separated from subjective notions than moonbeams from the moon. Objects do not exist by themselves, but only in our busy brains, Aswaghosha pleaded ; they are mere phenomena of consciousness. The whole objective world is a castle in the air, a dream devised and staged by the mind, and mortal mind is utter delusion. Christian science has an eastern counterpart in Buddhist science as conceived by Aswaghosha two thousand years ago. Subconscious memory, he tells us, clouds the soul, and results from previous experiences. Pictures, conjured up, hold us

spell-bound ; we fondly dwell on dim memories of our remembered or forgotten past, our actual and prenatal history. We go on dreaming, and fancy all this optical deceit, the gay and dismal display of life's perpetual motion. Awakened sages who have overcome the force of memory are not at the mercy of their thoughts, but can manipulate and control every subconscious impression ; they know the meaning of personality, see humanity in man, conceive the general behind the specific. Sages realize the eternal in the transient, and revere abiding unity in all things. Name and form vanish before the supernormal vision ; what remains is the essence of things, the thing itself, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. In a superconscious state the complex compounds of mind and matter break up in simple elements which again merge in Being. Shadow and semblance turn to substance, are transubstantiated. There is nothing left of shape and form, either gross or subtle, except its spiritual perfume. According to Aswaghosha's super-idealism, soul alone is real, is THE thing, is THAT thing. Hence Buddhist science which repudiates mortal mind is known as Thatness (tathata).

The new idealism which became a characteristic feature of Neo-Buddhism was virtually the old Upanishad teaching that we can only see life through the spectacles of our impressions ; what the universe really is nobody knows. Our preconceived notions and sensations need constant correction. The whole creation is a mirage and image, a floating film and

flighty vision, a web of sensation or tissue of mortal mind as Aswaghosha expresses it. We rarely give ourselves as we are. We want to make an impression ; we act and pose and bluff. But appearance cannot be the real thing. Love and hatred, flattery and abuse, attraction and aversion, and another thousand opposites, sway the muddled mind ; they blur the cosmic picture in our excited, confused, distorted brains. Buddha had preached the middle path between extremes: courage instead of rashness or cowardice, generosity between extravagance and meanness, and so forth. The Saka sage was dispassionate, serene and selfless. Aswaghosha too had a keen sense of proportion, and in moments of exaltation was privileged to see things as they are, their inmost self through outer seeming, without the intermediary of sense and reason, though through a glass darkly. Spiritual laggards mistake falsehood's fancy-haze for truth ablaze ; to them the real and the true are veiled. The blinded can only contemplate the shadow and semblance of reality ; economic pressure and sex-urge weigh them down. We all live in a vague and misty dreamworld of our own ; nothing presents itself alike to any two men. There are not two individuals who look at a problem or event from exactly the same angle, just as there are not two faces precisely alike.

## 11. A s w a g h o s h a

Many-sided Da Vinci was a superb painter, and



also far ahead of his time as an engineer. He constructed a bassoon which helped to develop musical art. Da Vinci laid down the principles of hydraulics and aviation, and first discerned the "elevation of continents." When he walked through the streets of Milan, his long fair face crowned with a black cap, and the blond beard flowing down over his favorite rose-colored tunic, passers-by drew aside and whispered: There he goes to paint the Last Supper! No less inventive and versatile was Aswaghosha. That supreme ornament of Kanishka's court wrote Buddha's biography, and rearranged the master's theology. He was a playwright and a musician of no mean order. His proud presence stirred men to wonder at his marvelous powers. Kings and cities bid for him, as though the haughty genius were himself a miracle. For the purpose of religious propaganda, Aswaghosha invented the rastavar. The sweet strains he drew from that string instrument were so plaintive and melodious that listeners began to ponder on the soullessness (non-atma-ness) of phenomenal life and of individualism. Many reflected that mental images cause all this objective illusion, and are vain and void indeed. And they came to learn that self-realization, the superconscious vision, is the effect of restraining and controlling the idle pictures in the restless brain.

In many cases India's religious reformers were blue blood of the military rather than priestly caste. The conservative clergy felt antagonistic to radical innovations touching on the sacred deposit of patri-

archal faith and morals. The opposition to priestly doctrine and discipline included the alien hordes of the savage north, but was generally headed by Aryan leaders of thought. The nobility first proclaimed the fearless Upanishads. Buddha was not an ecclesiastic, but an aristocrat. In one of Aswaghosha's plays, a converted brahmin is vehemently denounced for giving ear to the roar of the Scythian lion, that infidel junker and modernist! The convert exclaims enthused: In the cold I take refuge at the fire, during the summer heat in the cool stream, in darkness and gloom with the Buddha! He alone gave me amata, sweet realization of immortality!

Aswaghosha's father had launched a vigorous anti-Buddhist campaign all over India. The son was born in Patna. About A.D. 100 he was attracted to the new theology which had not been established long. Aswaghosha's artistic treatment of religious lore has much in common with the genius of Gandhara sculpture. The embellished style represents a transitional phase of devotion. The vision of reality was no longer simple and direct, but veiled in symbolic art and poetic imagery.

## 12. B u d d h i s t Y o g a

Many manuals exist on Neo-Buddhist idealism; the title of the most important text is "Transcendentalism." The foremost exponent of the new

theology in the latter part of the second century was Nagarjun. This brahmin from the Dekhan lived in Behar, and in his younger days had been an ardent suddhantist. His Sanskrit commentary on Transcendentalism molded Buddha's golden mean to a philosophy of the middle path. We are admonished once more, neither to be prone nor averse to this butterfly existence which proves vanity and vexation of spirit. Nothing abides; hard facts and practical acts burst like soap-bubbles, and vanish like a conjurer's trick. Inbred delusion (Nagarjun calls it cosmic nescience) veils and dims the mind which consequently mistakes clouds for crags, and the seeming for the solid. Visible life-forms are dust and dead, but their hidden vitality, the life throbbing and pulsating in organic matter, is everlasting. To the visionless the unseen is a non-entity, and appears to be non-existent. But like summer clouds before the golden sun, so is innate ignorance scattered before the golden mean in conduct. Nagarjun told nothing new when he sounded a warning neither to renounce the world nor to sink in its slime and mire; to avoid vulgar obtrusion as well as sheepish restraint; not to be hustling and aggressive nor servile and submissive, neither too slick nor too soft; neither abusive nor commendatory; to keep right in the rush and bustle of life, and yet be above it; to enjoy all things, but contemplate them from an eternal angle. He upheld the individuality of immortal soul, just as yoga, the secret of atma-bodhi, affirms the personality of almighty God. Nagarjun knew the lure of a great

personality which after all is an expression of the impersonal, and reflects the unmanifest. Another concession he made to the shallow tastes and base instincts of the money-making middle class was the infusion of psychic practice and occult spell, vibhuti and tantra, into Neo-Buddhism. Medical magnetism and magic were productive of Buddhist yoga.

Yoga teaches that health is harmony, and disease is discord. Violation of nature's laws is fraught with dissonance; non-injury attunes to the infinite, and makes contacts with the heart of humanity. Yoga is a blend of psychology and transcendentalism, Sankhya and Vedanta, with a theistic sprinkling. A sane co-ordination of rational thought and soul-vision is not easy, and yoga is not always logical and consistent. But yoga is unique as a practical presentation of the spiritual life. Its teachings are clear, and its methods precise.

The formation of crystals, the shape of flowers, the movement of stars, the whole evanescent evolution of created things, is determined by an eternal law of harmony. The Sankhyas attempted to rationalize the cosmic rhythm which prevades the universe. Their system re-echoes some of the old Atharva magic practised by Vedic medicine-men. King Nal wanted to learn the rhythm of nature and the harmony of spheres. So he studied Sankhya, the science of numbers, the enumeration of psychological data. The earliest Vedic wisdom is the source of sankhya-yoga, that broad twin-current from which Buddhist philoso-

phy is derived. Interior analysis and self-realization are to break the tyranny of the delusive ego. A clever juggler manipulates phantom-objects; jiggling monkeys grip the bending branch of a forest tree, and let it go again. The restless squirrel-mind clutches all sorts of mental pictures. "Yoga practice" (yogachara) teaches how to throw them overboard and "submerge" them; how to control the mind. Auto-suggestion to the effect that the world is not what it seems is part of medical psychology which Buddhist yogis cultivate eagerly. Nature has hypnotized us into false beliefs, they maintain, and auto-suggestion can de-hypnotize us; it is curative and brings happiness, if only used with wise restraint and modesty. Moreover, when the contemplation of visible forms is turned inward to the subtle workings of the mind, this introspection or survey of the sequence of mental phenomena recalls to memory much of the forgotten past, and allows a firmer grip on current problems. One-pointedness, thinking of one thing at the time, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, grows to visions of immortality; in the crucible of yoga they are transmuted into service to humanity.

### 13. The Brothers From Peshawar

First comes the conqueror and colonizer; merchants and missionaries follow the pioneer's trail. Iranian invasions of Indo-Scythian territory were frequent;

Mazdaism reinforced the monotheism of the new theology. Ujain in western India was a hotchpotch of races and religions. The social vice and folly of that gay cosmopolitan city is vividly depicted in the *Toy Cart*, a sensational Sanskrit play. Subsequently a native dynasty, the noble Guptas, rose to power in Ujain. They were devout Hinduists, but tolerant enough not to reject the new theology. The ever-growing light of Neo-Buddhism outshone the waning rival-star of suttantism. Asanga and Vasubandhu, sons of a Peshawar brahmin, had been avowed agnostics, before they propagated the new theology. Both lectured in Oudh, in the north-west provinces, in the fourth or fifth century, and ingratiated themselves with the polished Gupta court. They bagged even greater triumphs among the Kashmir recognitionists who "recognize" under the myriads of masks, worn on the mundane stage, the one all-prevading elixir and essence, grown gigantic in one human organism, and run low in another. We are the mummies, impersonating the world's tragi-comedy, merry and sorry, brainy and brawny, premier and pauper, swami and sweeper. The identical life-force is present everywhere, though infinitely shaded and graded. Electric lights may fail, but electricity is inexhaustible. The same holds good of sakti or vitality, and the donor is always bigger than the gift. Life's visible vagaries and vicissitudes spend their strength sooner or later. The ever-pregnant womb of nature, personified as mother Kali, is more emotional

than rational; the whole creation throbs in tuneful response to her extravagant impulses. Kali's travailing womb is a heaving sea; individuals, in endless succession, submerge in that boundless ocean of productive energy to re-emerge, each at the appointed hour. The divine mother is pleased to show herself to self-emptied dasas or devotees, not as the infinite and absolute, but as an adorable apparition, a luring lorelei. The omnipotent mother plays hide-and-seek with her favorites, and allows them an occasional glimpse behind the veil of maya. Sometimes the world-mother effaces the differentiated ego; in moments of exaltation, her most intimate lovers such as Chaitanya or Ramakrishna realize, in utter self-oblivion, the impersonal One behind its many impersonations. Kali's divine grace flashes a moment's "recognition" of amata or immortality on mortal mind. Self-seekers antagonize Kali, and never know the thrill of ecstasy and mystic union.

Asanga followed in Nagarjun's track of psychic culture; he loved to define and describe the seven occult bodhisatta degrees; the seven ghostly castles to be won by yoga aspirants. "In the fifth degree the sense of duality begins to merge in oneness."<sup>1</sup> Asanga

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1. See the author's *Rose Petals and Gorse Bloom*, page 25. Bodhisatta and amata are Pali terms. The former signifies "essence" (satta, Sanskrit sattwa) of "wisdom" (bodhi), the true quality of Buddhahood. Amata, Sanskrit amrita, means deathlessness. Neo-Buddhism has been derived from Mazdaism on semasiological grounds; see *Indo-Iranian Philology* (Bombay, 1929).

fused Buddhist yoga with Buddhist science. The rapture of his soaring flights is responsible for many an ecstatic udana or utterance in Hindu poetry, but the new eclecticism was outlived by the philosophy of the middle path which was dominant until the eighth century.

Vasubandhu, the younger brother, was converted late in life. He regarded the material world as a projection of the subjective mind which Vasubandhu thoroughly analyzed and logically classified.

#### 14. B u d d h i s t I n f l u e n c e s

Uncompromising idealism is a sacred flame which lights the torch of poetic fire. Spinoza's divine madness strongly affected Goethe's realistic vision, and Kant's clear-cut transcendentalism was the forerunner of Schiller's moral enthusiasm. The teaching of the Peshawar brothers uplifted and refined the lax tone of the Indian theatre.

Kalidas and Bhavabhuti, the two leading dramatists, plunged headlong in the sea of Buddhist speculation. Asanga's rhapsodies lured Kalidas, the prince of playwrights, who died in the fifth century. Mage Kalidas, "dasa of Kali," was born in Kashmir; his choicest flower, the finest play ever written in Asia, bears the subtitle "Recognition." Separation from the beloved entails intense suffering, until recognition brings reunion and relief. The sage creator of Sakun-



tala, like his Weimar affinity of the nineteenth century, transmuted philosophy to the pure gold of poetry. Vasubandhu's unyielding metaphysics prepared the way for Bhavabhuti, about 670-730, the supreme idealist of the Sanskrit stage.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism did not only impress the stage, but influenced, long before Kalidasa, heroic poetry. The Hindus, like the Hellenes, glory in two saga-songs, both recorded in Sanskrit. Many are the authors of the Great Epic which is modeled on national folk-ballads, and narrates the early fights and settlements along the western Ganges. The younger Rama Lay, composed by Valmiki in Kosala, relates the Aryan occupation of southern India. Kosala or Rama-land was always famed for minstrelsy. Rhapsodists recited popular ballads in melodious Pali; that supple Sanskrit dialect became the vehicle of Buddhist songs and sermons. The Sutta Nipata, a venerable Buddhist text, studded with golden precepts, preserves ancient Pali lyrics. The vernacular ballad literature helped to enrich the tone and tenor of the Ramayana. Valmiki's style is more ornate and finished than the simpler diction of the sister-epic.

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1. Recognition is a common feature in Euripides and Shakespeare. After sixteen winters' sorrow, sore laid on, the repentant king is shown the statue of Hermione, dear life, his very self, redeeming his numb soul from living death. The finest recognition scene in Greek tragedy is that between Iphigenia and her brother whose soul is also benumbed after slaying his guilty mother.—The author met recognitionists in Kashmir in the summer of 1928.

In the end, brahminism disarmed Buddha, even as the Christian church triumphed over Plato, but in either case the ousted doctrine came to be the cornerstone of the winning cause. Humanity reflects divinity, but the celestial imprint is impaired; the handwriting is not always legible. Creative rhythm is the perfect expression of divine planning. Corruption in the flesh is converted by the incorruptible type, and must revert, sooner or later, to the logos as Plato terms the ideal pattern and exemplar. Is not St. John's notion of the saviour as logos (word of God) purest Platonism, foreshadowing the coming of Christ to the gentiles, just as Hebrew prophecies prefigured the Messianic fulfilment to the Jews?

Buddhism as a state-religion was driven from the land of its birth, but the noble exile lorded spiritually the helpless and embarrassed victors. Orthodox brahmins secretly adored the startling message of Buddha, and zealously emulated the stunning suttas or sayings of the master. Under the spell of Pali suttas they continued to write sutras or aphorisms on the nature of deity (brahma). These learned Brahma Sutras store the essence of the Veda, and declare that the ultimate "end" (anta) of prayer and sacrifice is self-effacement, the recognition of brahma in all things, and of nothing but brahma who is the one without a second. Many instructors in priestly seminaries drafted Brahma Sutras, and these philosophic manuals were called vedanta instead of suttanta, the older and odious Buddhist name. At last the politic pundits of

the brahmin caste aligned and allied themselves with Neo-Buddhism which they could not afford to antagonize any longer. The compromise was easy enough. Devotion to bodhisattas harmonized well with the worship of Krishna and other Hindu gods; Buddhist idealism, the doctrine of vanity and void, was almost identical with the brahmin tenet of a-dwaita or non-dualism. Soul (atma) is one, and multiple nature is like a veil cast over the divine unity. All air is one, mountain air and sea breezes and the breath in our lungs. Even so is supersoul (brahma) one, although it appears differentiated and individualized in the enslaved myriads of toiling humanity. The veil of nature (maya) conceals the universality of brahma, until adwaita removes inborn limitations, and renders consciousness cosmic.

The sparkling threads of Upanishad fancy were spun on the Buddhist loom; the final and finest texture was the golden web of Vedanta. Its reflected light outshone and surpassed the Buddhist light-giver in the end. It is the same with the four Hindu ramifications of yoga; all four are rooted in Neo-Buddhist soil, but have long outgrown the parental environment, the shrewd brahmins adopting and adapting them to orthodoxy. Vedic practitioners knew how to treat cuts and dislocations; they set bones and were experts in massage. Medical treatises were divided in four sections, comprising diseases, diagnosis, treatment, and last of all health and hygiene. Buddha applied the "fourfold Aryan path" to the healing of souls. The

four verities he emphasized are suffering, its origin, viz. desire, cure and cessation of pain, and lastly nirvana or salvation. The four yoga methods, originally medical spells, have a surgical foundation.

## IX. YOGA

Heaven accepts those who reject themselves. The Gita or Song of the Sun points to four ways of self-rejection. These methods of self-realization are action (karma), devotion (bhakti), discrimination (gnana) and renunciation (raja-yoga). The following observations are based on Vivekananda's personal teachings.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Karma Yoga

Karma yoga is the gospel of labor, doing one's work conscientiously for the sake of duty. There must be little concern for visible results; success and failure rest in God's hand. Leave the outcome to him. Honest trading lies along the road of karma; so do charitable acts, nursing the sick, housing the poor, clothing the ill-clad, and feeding the hungry. But each act must be done from a sense of duty, and not for the sake of profit or praise.

Karma yoga then is disinterested action, free from personal motives; action done from the loftier stand-

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1. Phrases like selfishness or self-rejection refer to the individual self, but self-realization to the universal self (atma). Another word with an antithesis of meaning is "nerve"; nervy means vigorous, but nervous is almost hysterical.

point of duty. Character, a bundle of habits, is of our own karma or making. Always show character! exhorts the Gita; fulfil your duty and the moral law. Never shun the consequence of your actions, or of duty exacted by birth and breeding, environment and training. We are all born entangled by limitations, slaves to social surroundings. Let us see to it that we die as masters of circumstance. The inner light must be our moral standard. "It is better to perform swa-dharma, one's own dharma or duty, though defectively, than someone else's duty, however perfectly. It is more profitable to die than disregard swadharma ; to do a duty, not one's own, is fraught with danger "; Gita 3,35. Environment is a severe taskmaster. He handcuffs all who shirk duty, but moral heroes face dharma like men, and without bitterness or resentment reap the fruit of adversity.

Every nation has swadharma, its own standard of national ethics. A man's inner nature decides his further growth, and marks the point his individual evolution has reached. If the material wherewith he builds is evil thought, he will rear characteristics compelling him to commit vicious deeds. You are the shaper of your destiny; what you did yesterday is your fate (bhaga) today. Good seeds, sown now, will mature in due season. First develop power, and then grip the opportunity. Be patient; let the fruit ripen ere you pluck it. Everything comes to him who waits. Each individual is born with a duty of his own. Let him resignedly accept it as sent by God. A karma-

yogi never rebels against fate, but always prays: Thy will be done! mine is futile. Rich and poor, master and employee, householder and ascetic,—they all have different duties. It is the saint's duty to suffer injuries with a blessing on his lips, and never to hurt a creature even in his dreams. A warrior is duty-bound to guard his country, if need be, against his own kinsmen; to defend the national honor by force of arms is soldierly swadharma. A priest resenting and resisting evil, and a junker averse to fighting, equally incur a sin.

Be careful about every action. Attend scrupulously even to little things; they mold character, and this life's karma is next life's dharma.

Little drops of water,  
 Little grains of sand,  
 Make the mighty ocean,  
 And the bounteous land.

An untold number of insignificant habits forms our character, often without our knowing; it needs a crisis to reveal character. The infinite is most conspicuous in the infinitesimal. The final touches, given to a painting in order to perfect it, may appear trifling to a casual onlooker, but perfection is no trifle.

That much on karma yoga.

## 2. Progressive Yoga

More advanced souls who have tasted and tested karma yoga, and extracted the honey, take a higher flight to attain final emancipation. Two ways open out before them, devotion and discernment, bhakti and gnana. The aspirant must choose between the two, guided by the needs of his own nature, according to swadharma.

Lovers of God benefit from occasionally repeating to themselves a pithy saying from some devotional book, or a beautiful line of poetry, able to uplift the heart, though only for a few moments, above life's drudgery and temptations, and strike a truer note in the weary breast. Devout Catholics tell the beads of the rosary, and contemplate, by the aid of pictures, the passion of our lord, or else the mysteries, glad, sad and glorious. Pious Hindus murmur He-I. "He" stands for the illimitable and everlasting, and the two sacred syllables imply: I am a spark divine, not merely mortal clay!

All these are forms of bhakti or devotion to a personal lord. Spiritual alchemy transmutes piety in hearts with a transcendental bent into adoration of ideal beauty; fragrance and essence are extracted from every virtue. Poets and painters love the beautiful. To them bhakti is contemplation of never-fading loveliness, mirrored in nature's divinely fair, but ever-dying forms. The goal of the bhakta or devotee is to burn physical attractions in the sacred flame of divine



love which blazes in selfless hearts. Murillo, Mozart and some of the medieval minstrels are bhakta types; they gazed on celestial charms where prosaic vision only feels earthly delight. Subtle seekers after Him like Descartes or Kant are followers of gnana.

Gnana is pure reason, unfettered by prejudice, and able to differentiate between reality and appearances, sat and asat, the ever-present One and countless phenomena which come and go, all held in close embrace by that mysterious One. Gnana is gnosis or spiritual wisdom. The fourth evangelist was a gnani or gnostic. All who ignore the spiritual basis of the physical universe are agnanis or agnostics.

As more direct than either bhakti or gnana, though narrow and beset with sharp thorns, sages point to raja yoga; the royal road leads to perfect control of every nerve and muscle, of every outward-going energy and thought, to utter oblivion of the objective plane, to that diviner state of self-completion and pure consciousness (chit) where atma, the eternal subject, reigns supreme . . .

Oft from the royal road we part,  
Lost in the mazes of the heart.

Exalted souls like St. John of the Cross, that chosen bird of holiness, soar upward on the wings of bhakti and gnana; royal yoga is the bird's tail which keeps the equilibrium. Wild swans and fearless eagle-souls use that rudder to steer them through a turmoiled sea of delusion and desire unto nirvana's blessed shore.

### 3. R h y t h m i c B r e a t h i n g

Buddhists used yoga increasingly as a vehicle of salvation. Brahmins, scenting the trail of the "great vehicle" as Neo-Buddhism came to be called, systematized yoga, the science of Being, early in the Christian era. The haggling spirit of our mechanical age is often condemned as a deadly poison, since it utterly disregards the demands of the larger life, and marks as real only such values as can be touched and handled. Yoga teachers have always looked on visible things as pictorial shadows cast on life's screen by the unseen reality. The play-ground of the sportive senses, this whole universe, seems to them a faint copy of a fuller life, of an abiding world to which they attach a permanent worth, and to which they aspire in devotional exercises and enwrapt meditation.

Yogic allegory likens the soul to the midday sun. The bright daystar is an infinite flow of light and life, emitting infinitesimal particles of sunshine. Suppose, these myriads of sunbeams were separated from the sun, they could not even exist for a moment apart from their parental source. The case of living beings is not much different. All individual vigor and vital strength is drawn from that hidden infinite, the primal life-fount wherein the travailing creation thrives and throbs and labors.

That rhythmic infinite or harmony of spheres is the inexhaustible storehouse of all created rhythm and life-force. To be attuned to the never-silent sym-

phony of divine strength, means health and happiness, and cures disorder and disease in others. The artist who has once sipped from the magic well of reality thrills and kindles kindred souls. But in order to spread harmony, he must be harmonized himself. A teacher of art may have an exquisite technique, and a perfect system of instruction, but if he lacks the eagle-vision of the spirit, he is only a mechanical interpreter. At best he will be methodical, and classify his dry theories; the door of the inner sanctuary is locked to mere skilful manipulators.

Immortal self is garbed in mortal flesh! This supernormal assurance is the keynote of religion. The delicate mechanism of yoga includes rhythmic breathing, and has been neatly arranged by Patanjali under four captions; they deal with superconsciousness, the means of attaining it, occult powers and self-realization. That illustrious brahmin seems to have been connected with the learned fraternity among whom the Gita was composed. His yoga aphorisms were recast in the age of Vasubandhu whose psycho-analysis they impugn and yet adopt. Patanjali worked out the science of breath in every detail. He maintained that it is perfectly feasible to draw vitality straightway from the boundless ocean of harmony and health, in particular from the sun, so that we may be constantly rejuvenated and refreshed, electrified by rhythm as it were. Every public speaker and actor should master rhythmic force, and achieve harmony of soul. Rhythm will strengthen his oratory, and self-expression will

help him to self-realization. Rhythmic breath carries force and persuasion; harmonious breathing is curative. Persistent and methodical breathing charges the physical frame with rhythmic motion and dynamic energy. Rhythm is hygienic, and alleviates nervous disorders such as stuttering and stammering, palpitation of the heart and outbursts of temper. Deep and regular breathings from the diaphragm render the voice rich and sonorous; its very tone and inflection will lay subtler shades of meaning into the spoken word. The complexion will become clear, the body light, and the appetite healthy. Nausea and indigestion, insomnia and bilious headaches, boils and pimples, will gradually vanish before the magic mastery and mystery of breath. On the slightest provocation, untutored minds flare up in mad excitement, and lose all self-control. Breath experts take annoyances more calmly.

Rhythmic breathing like every other art requires hard and steady practice, before complete lung control is attained, and through it self-command which is the gateway to self-knowledge: the mortal becomes conscious that he is immortal and has eternal life.

A rebel leader was once taken captive, and imprisoned on the top of a deserted tower. There he was left to die of starvation. His loving wife came in the dead of night to his rescue. She attached a silken thread, as long as the tower, to a beetle whose horns she had besmeared with honey. The insect, being set on the tower wall, head upward, sniffed the honey, and crawled along merrily. The prisoner seized the

beetle; the lady then fastened a piece of string to the lower end of the silk thread. The string was pulled up, after that some pack-thread, and last of all a stout rope. The captive let himself down, and was free! Desire for spiritual liberty amid physical and economic bondage is like the beetle. Thereby we get hold of breath control, and through it of self-mastery. Finally we seize the rope of self-realization which means freedom to the imprisoned soul.

#### 4. T h o u g h t C o n t r o l

The science of breath is a vast and intricate subject; only the briefest outline can be given here.

First of all, posture has to be practised. When you sit down to breathe, you will be surprised how fidgety and nervous that body of yours is. Just when you want to keep quiet, it will itch here, and twitch there, and will disturb and annoy you all the time. You will have to acquire a firm and steady seat, an easy and natural posture. The spinal column must be free, the head erect, the body alert and upright.

The next and more important lesson, after mastering the posture, is thought-control. You must learn to stand sentinel over your thoughts; at present they control you, and you are at their mercy. One morning you wake up with a bright and happy mind ; next day you have a splitting headache, and feel utterly miserable. You cannot breathe rhythmically when a

hundred conflicting mental currents rush headlong through the restless brain, creating discord, and dragging the poor helpless mind in a hundred directions, just when you wish to concentrate. A productive artist simply cannot create unless his soul is one-pointed, enamored of one ideal, not agitated by alien thoughts, but tranquil and serene. Do you imagine that Beethoven could have composed his heavenly symphonies, or Shakespeare his deep-laid plots, if their mental lake, so to speak, had been perturbed by worry, or ruffled by anger and resentment?

Stones thrown into water create ripples, and conceal the bottom of the lake from view. Each thought passing through the brain produces a wave in the mind-lake, and then subsides in subconscious oblivion. There the forgotten thought stays, ready to bob up to renewed activity, whenever aroused by some association of ideas.

Thought-control checks the countless waves in the mind-lake, holds them down, and does not allow old thoughts to come up during breathing practice. Thoughts have a mischievous tendency, even as the body has, to come forward just when they are not wanted.

## 5. H e a l i n g   G i f t s

The teaching of rhythm does not end, but rather begins here. Posture and thought-control are only

preliminary lessons preparing the student for the rhythmical flow of breath. Hindu teachers of breathing commend as an elementary practice to inhale four units of time, to retain the breath sixteen units, and exhale eight. This simple exercise should be done every morning before breakfast. Do it at the open window in a sitting position, and send out a loving thought of universal goodwill before you begin. That wave of affection will calm and strengthen your mind. After persevering a month or so, your thinking will be clearer, your power of expression more forcible, the words you choose will be neat and to the point, and carry conviction. Your brain will feel cool and calm, your nerves will be better, you will have no more spine complaints or throat trouble, your general health will improve. Advanced lessons in breathing should not be practised without the aid of an experienced tutor. Otherwise you might break a blood vessel, or injure yourself otherwise.

Everything in the science of breath is determined by arithmetical proportion. As vitality (prana) courses rhythmically through nerves and lungs, and rushes irresistibly across the blood and brain, there comes a joyous feeling of health and ease ; every fibre of the body feels energized and electrified. It is a joy to live; life is no longer misery, earth is no longer hell, but has changed to a garden of paradise. Rhythm, the holy breath and spirit, has dispelled all self-delusion. The dehypnotized soul, once a tenant of mortal clay, but now a deathless child of God, enters

the glorious inheritance of divine sonship. Disease and morbid thoughts and sickly sentiments cling to those only who feel the heavy burden of mortality. Baby-souls who have not yet found themselves lack self-confidence and faith in eternal life ; they never experience the rapture of atma-bodhi. All these delights come from rhythm which releases and harmonizes the growing soul, attunes it to God.

Rhythmical breathing is the finest tonic for shattered nerves, far better than a dose of medicine or a vacation at the seaside, and certainly less expensive. Continued practice will not only bring signs of nerve purification, but healing gifts, therapeutic power and psychic intuition, superior to learned argument and heated discussion. All this will develop. You will be able to read other minds, their thoughts will come to you in picture-form, but yogis generally avoid these tempting bypaths, and go straight ahead for self-realization. The magnetic rock of magic, more irresistible than the perilous lure of sex, has shipwrecked many a strong-winged soul. In the temple-schools of ancient India, therapeutics was taught together with rhythmic gymnastics, dancing and breathing.

## 6. T r a n s m u t a t i o n o f S e x F o r c e

Deep rhythmic breathing through the nostrils leads on to the practice of mental concentration.



Thoughts are apt to wander ; you are naturally distracted. You must learn to collect scattered thoughts, and to restrain the activity of the mind. The golden sunset floods a floral bed with light ; imagine a radiant flower to rest in your heart. Concentrate successively on the heart, throat-well, cerebellum and the point between the eyebrows. The object of such romantic fancies is to bring the various nerve centres under conscious control.

Full success in yoga is impossible without chastity in thought, word and deed. Every initiate knows how to transmute the accumulated sex energy into spiritual force. About the method of transmutation yogis are reticent. The little the author has been able to ascertain is that they seem to know of a physiological process by which the retained life-essence can be drawn up through the spinal column to the cerebellum. The periods of transmutation are computed according to the sun's position at the hour of birth. After scoring three years of success in brahmacharya (chastity), or figuratively speaking, after thrice slaying the twelve beasts of the zodiac, the celibate takes the mystic degree of self-mastery. The aspirant is now an apta or adept, qualified for the higher life ; he is regenerate or twice-born.

At the time of death, mystics say, the twice-born are promoted to a godlike state. There is a curious belief current in India that in the interval between death and rebirth the souls of the departed have to work out their karma, the inevitable result of previous

thoughts and deeds ; but regenerates pass right on to the sun. The renewed in spirit have "fried" all natural seeds ; future re-embodiment on this crude planet of heavy matter is impossible for adepts. At death, their released soul, clothed in a fine body of light, is to enjoy in realms of rhythm and beauty full fruition and final emancipation from the manifest state. Even solar manifestation, the most perfect of all, is no better than a golden dream of reality (sat), and earth life with its gross impurities and puerilities is but the shadow of a dream.

## 7. Starlore

Reader, have you ever dipped in an idle moment in the wonders of starlore? Each sign of the zodiac is supposed to represent some temptation on the spiritual battle-field. For example, time-serving and craving for popularity are said to characterize the month which begins about the twentieth of January. The next group, born in the sign of the fish, February-March, is labeled as restless and ever worrying, though outwardly calm. Persons who wish to control others rather than themselves are declared to have the bitterest struggle in April-May, the period of the sun's apparent transit through Taurus which symbolizes the bulldog spirit, unruly and resenting to be led. Again, the fiery lion's sign, July-August, is prone to be misguided by strong appetites and

passions. Fondness of praise, and the desire to shine before others, govern the following month, and so forth. Star-gazers interpret Hercules at the parting of the ways as man's duplicity, and the twelve labors as pleasure's and duty's fight for supremacy. The soul-contest is incessant, and never stops once during the twelve months of the year.

Money-making fakes know little astronomy and less mathematics ; it is their fault that starlore has fallen in disrepute in western lands. Every eastern potentate has a court-astrologer, and even humble cottagers, at a son's birth, have his native chart and karmic fate drawn up. But knowledge progresses with giant strides. Astrology, alchemy, medical and metrical incantations still flourish in outlying country districts or amid primitive communities. As moving mists in the prairie precede the first signs of daylight, these early gropings after light prepared the way for astronomy, chemistry and surgical skill. With the advance of science, medicine-men had to make room for physicians ; magicians for mechanic inventors and electric wizards. Where civilization decays as in declining Rome, the forgotten fads and fancies start up again like weeds in a neglected garden.

In the delicate bloom of racial spring, the Aryan mind consulted the stars, and peopled nature's fairy-forms with gods and genii, wood-fays and elves.

The natural world could show  
No common object, but the eye

At once involved with alien glow  
The soul's bright iris-bow.

Then followed the season of ripening fruit ; old superstitions crumbled and tumbled, and fled in wild disorder before the onslaught of abstract thought and rational reflection. Now reigns the barren winter of soul-deadening utility and dull discontent ; mass production lowers art and dims vision.

A flower is just a flower ;  
Man, bird and beast are but beast, bird  
and man,  
Simply themselves, uncinct by dower  
Of dyes which, when life's day began,  
Round each in glory ran.

(Browning)

No fairer miracle was ever wrought in history than industrialism if it could only be raised and redeemed by spiritual culture. But in a mechanized age which is soulless most men become machines and walking corpses. Ours is a predatory era when sweating in the service of profiteers engenders a slave-mentality ; shackled minds are tied to the triumphal car of dollar dictatorship and abject servility. Food and dress, housing and diversion, are artificial ; social relations are frivolous or strained. Religion is no longer realization of the heart, but has hardened to a cold intellectual assent to some dogma, or dissent

from it. The higher life of the spirit, pure and bracing as the free air on the hills, is too keen and subtle for the sluggish impulses and earthly vibrations of a soul-crippled race. But we must move on, over hill and dale, along tortuous paths, from lower depths to greater heights, *per aspera ad astra*. Progress is never a straight line, but a curve of ups and downs.

Chastity is laughed to scorn by pleasure-adoring wits and wantons. The celibates of yoga fame are hardly understood, those saintly godmen, bent on conserving the elixir of life, and transmuting the stored-up fluid to spiritual virility. The mentality of India did not fare much better ; it has also grown conventional and complex. Even the age of Patanjali was no longer direct, plain and simple ; or else the dauntless dictator and psychic pioneer would hardly have standardized thought-control in pithy aphorisms. In earlier centuries, when civic life was less sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, scholastic definitions were not the fashion; brahma-charya, the Way of Brahma, did not yet mean transmutation of sex energy, but virginity prior to marriage. Vedic boys of good families were instructed by a guru or priestly preceptor in all social and sacrificial duties pertaining to the household life. The tutor built the young man's character, instilled heroic views, warned against sex abuse, and pointed out that clean thoughts render marriages happy, healthy and blest with offspring. Truthfulness, self-criticism and chastity are the triple preparation for self-knowledge and self-reverence.

## X. VEDANTA

A glance at the dictionary will show that words are freely borrowed from alien tongues ; occasionally a loan is returned with a foreign label. Bulwark (city wall) was parisianized to boulevard (Wall Street) ; the vocable in its French garb and guise re-entered the English word-book. Such migrants are like silk bales, formerly shipped via Peshawar to western mills, to be re-woven and sent back to China. Similar is the status of the Sanskrit sutras. After each lecture given in a theological college, it was summarized in an aphorism or sutra by the pundit-professor, none more illustrious than Badarayan. Sutra means " thread " of an argument ; students had to memorize such handy and convenient guide-words. Vedic sutras were transposed to Buddhist suttas which once more were reset in Vedanta sutras or Brahma sutras, God (brahma) being the end (anta) of the Veda and its wisdom.

### 1. Buddhists in Disguise

First comes the savage clash of arms, century after century, before the bleeding nations learn to agree to differ, and resort to arbitration. The clash of faiths, no less fierce and deadly, precedes the disarmament of creeds which is the portal to universal

religion. In the third century, Mani, a Persian noble, blended Mazdaism with Buddhist and Christian beliefs. The new eclecticism, known as Manicheism, was carried east along the silk route to Turfan. In the eighth century, Hunnish hordes overran eastern Turkestan; the khan and his court professed Manicheism, but the Aryan populace, Tokhar-Scythians, clung to Neo-Buddhism. Manichean literature has been found in Turfan together with old Buddhist legends, fragments of Aesop's fables, and Christian documents written in Byzantine Greek.

More relevant to the subject of "Veda and Vedanta" than Buddha's influence on Mani is the infusion of Buddhist ideas in Hinduism. They are found in the younger Upanishads which warn man, not to lose his liberty because of nature's witchery and magic (*maya*). Ever since the second century when Nagarjun elaborated Buddhist yoga, the idealism of the new theology roused the suspicion and, at the same time, the admiration of the venerable Gaudas, a brahmin-school in the Behar district in Buddha-land. The Gaudas were severely taken to task for smuggling the fascinating heresy with an orthodox label into brahminism, and thus establishing the Vedanta philosophy. As a matter of fact, they legitimately interpreted sound Upanishad teachings. A rival school in southern India on the Malabar coast also recast sutras in Brahma sutras. Badarayan gave these brief doctrinal statements their final stamp and form, about the time when the brothers from Peshawar stirred

India to her depth by religious propaganda. The two Buddhist converts, and the Gauda adwaitists after them, declared that the visible world is void and vain. To which Badarayan added: our sense impressions, depending on exterior objects, are nil and worthless too, so many empty bubbles. Badarayan was originally not the name of an adwaita teacher, but of a flourishing school in Badara ; the busy Baluch port had early relations, cultural as well as commercial, with Peshawar and the Ganges valley. In the fifth century, Buddhism and Hinduism engaged in a deadly struggle ; the two foremost champions in the opposite camps seem to have been Vasubandhu and Badarayan. The new theology was silenced in the end, but brahminism, grown shallow and empiric by this time, was spiritually reinforced and uplifted by the ousted foe. Badarayan's victorious sutras attracted erudite commentators time and again.

In the eighth century, a fearless Gauda theologian composed a metrical exposition of non-dualism (adwaita). A firebrand, being swung round and round, the poet-sage explains, resembles a flaming wheel. Even so are physical phenomena but swift vibrations of consciousness. As the apparent wheel on fire is really one light, so the ever-turning wheel of mundane existence is one life, though, being set in motion, it appears manifold. As soon as mortal mind is sufficiently concentrated to withdraw from the objective world, and the thought-waves in the mind-lake are stilled, the unity of all life reveals itself to



the amazed contemplation. The Gauda poem is the earliest Vedantic document extant. Two generations later, a native of Malabar, Sankara (788-828), once more annotated Badarayan's terse aphorisms. The lapse of centuries had rendered their brevity more obscure and unintelligible than ever. The fierce religious strife of the fifth century still reverberates from Sankara's anti-buddhistic pages. His classical commentary which outshone all its precursors has exercised the finest Hindu minds, and continues to hold them spell-bound. Sankara, like Patanjali of yoga repute, thoroughly knew and amply utilized the scholastic philosophy of Neo-Buddhism, however much opposed he was to the disintegrating policy of Buddhist ahinsa, since non-aggressiveness tended to denationalize and emasculate India. Prominent brahmin co-religionists mocked at his crypto-Buddhism, and nicknamed him prachanna-bauddha, "Buddhist in disguise!" Sankara's sum of brahminic theology is a superb system of logical ideals, and has been termed "systematized Upanishads;" the Upanishads may equally well be defined as unorganized Vedanta. The new theologians had struck spiritual gold in the Upanishad mines long before the Malabar mage remolded the gleaming ore to a priceless treasure of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Not even Sankara's stoutest defenders need be angered and annoyed by the headline of this paragraph. "Buddhists in Disguise" is not meant as an opprobrium, but as a panegyric. The fourth evangelist stole Plato's thunder, and was lovingly dubbed a "pagan in Christian disguise."

## 2. S a n k a r a

Names and forms, maya-toys, are passing emotions, a temporary onrush and overflow of accumulated energy ; infinitude (brahma) alone abides. Sankara contemplated finite life in its endless moods and possibilities. Once the acharya was asked: Master, you always dwell on brahma, and make light of visible things! But can you explain nature's variety show? how is it that the One has become many? why did the ever-free allow itself to be caught in the meshes of space, time and causation? Sankara smiled as he replied: last night a mosquito stung me under the bed curtain. I did not reflect how the troublesome insect had slipped inside the net, but rather how to get the self-invited guest out again. Nature's netting has caught us, and keeps us captive in the tenement of flesh. We humans are where free men should not be, in prison! Adwaita points the way out of the bondage of the senses, so that we might rise again above inbred limitations to a higher vantage-ground, to a larger and more universal view of life. The lure of nature, I mean woman and wealth, still beguiles you, young man, or else you would never have idly enquired how it is that the perfect has become personal, and unity divided.

Master, do you believe in reincarnation? Yes and no! it all depends on one's state of consciousness. From a normal and natural standpoint, rebirth and personality, creator and creation, seem real enough.

But a more bracing and penetrating vision soon dispels all cherished day-dreams from the beclouded intellect, and only beholds unity where mortal mind still sees plurality of things and persons. "As soon as consciousness of non-difference arises," runs the classical passage in Sankara's commentary, "the transmigratory state of the indivisible soul and the creative quality of brahma vanish at once. The entire display of multiplicity springs from misconception, and is removed by perfect knowledge which leaves no room for creation and reincarnation."

In a superconscious state (nirvikalpa), Sankara felt one with brahma, but could no longer speak about it. He was profoundly silent, a master-muni, his magnificent logic being at perfect peace and rest. Reasoning only lasts until realization. The mouth that dares utter brahma defiles the sacred sound. But Sankara, the man of realization, was an acharya ; from supernormalcy he descended to a lower plane, and talked. Retaining his purified ego, the mahacharya instructed men that the "personal god" whom they ignorantly worshiped is in reality the boundless One without a second! Brahma with a long final vowel is ultimately brahma with a short final ; the masculine changes to the neuter gender. Brahma does not bless the national flag and destroy hostile armies, but is sat-chit-ananda, pure flame and spirit. Christ also taught that God is love. The saviour was a seer who saw the whole universe composed of

brahma and nothing else. God's beloved was love itself and brotherhood incarnate.

Sankara has been bitterly reproached for defending ritualism. St. Paul could not altogether disregard the Mosaic law ; his luminous trail was followed by Thomas Aquinas. Custom is not easily uprooted ; time hallows and hardens usage. Sankara treated the Vedic ritual tenderly after the example set in the Upanishads. No sooner had his shining ship plowed the Indian seas than the giant waves of error surged up again.

O ye who in some pretty little boat,  
 Eager to listen, have been following  
 Behind my ship that singing sails along,  
 Turn back to look again upon your shores ;  
 Do not put out to sea lest peradventure  
 In losing me you might be lost yourselves.  
 The sea I sail has never yet been passed.

(Dante)

Alas! Vanity Fair reasserted itself, and the weeds of empiricism shot up. Sankara's far-famed school had to make room for Ramanuj, a Neo-Vedantist and concessionist of the twelfth century. Ramanuj himself was a wonderful transcendentalist, deeply imbued with Buddhist yoga. "Whoever worships brahma is brahma! The human and divine are interdependent." But the vision of abiding truth dimmed in the lapse of time until it almost vanished. So many Hindu students seem more interested in the transient display

of things, in magic and mirage, than in Sankara or even Ramanuj.

### 3. More Facts and Fancies

The circumpolar zone, spinning round the north pole (meru), is splendidly illumined during devayan by the boreal aurora (ushas), but sparsely lit in dakshinayan by its solitary celestial guide, the Great Bear, thus named after the white polar bears with whom prehistoric man had to grapple. In the last Ice Age the Aryan nest became snowed up and glaciated ; pathikrits or pathfinders led the Arctic sires in arks, that is, giant canoes across vast ice-floes. After many venturous crossings and tossings the Hindu voyagers reached Garhwal on the Himalay slopes near the source of mother Ganga. Here badaris or jujubes, originally banyans, grew in abundance, and there were no more polar bears. The Great Bear was no longer understood ; saptarksh was renamed saptarshi, the seven sages, and a legend ad hoc invented.

Hindu homesteads were round like nomadic tents, but subsequently quadrangular, swastika-shaped. The northern entrance to the family estate was known as narayan or "path of heroes." Here the master-builder had set up a sun-shrine ; a bell or gong summoned the faithful to prayer : deva, namaste ! hail, sacred light ! you led our hero-sires, and lit the ancient

trail to badari-vana, the bonnie groves sacred to Vishnu. Praise Badari-narayana, one of his thousand holy names! The sun-cult of the Vaishnavas spread to Badara on the Baluch coast, and thence to Trichur, half-way between Calicut and Cochin ; all three on the Malabar littoral.

In Kaladi, a village north of Cochin, Sankara was born ; his grandfather was a Saiva priest, and his father a noted astronomer. The boy, strong and athletic, plunged in the swollen river one day. A crocodile pulled at his foot. In the face of death, the youth vowed supreme renunciation or "relinquishment in misfortune" (apad-sannyasa), as he termed it. Sankara emerged from the healing waves a declared sannyasi, left his scanty private property to relatives, and went in search of a guru to the Narmada shores. Thence he proceeded to a Himalayan hermitage ; Bhagavatpada (step of Vishnu) had just succeeded Gaudapada as monastic head. By this time the new theology had spread from Magadha to the snowy mountains and Kashmir. Bhagavatpada was a Vaishnava ; Buddha himself held the worshipful title chakravarti or wheel-turner. Vishnu turns the chakra or sun-wheel, that bright vision in the year-ring. Sankara was initiated in the "vision splendid;" one self-effulgent reality is manifest in myriads of fugitive appearances. His eyes, cleared from mortal infirmity, saw all deeds done in the flesh at a single glance. In commemoration of his investiture with the yellow robe, his maternal kin of Trichur founded

near the sun-shrine a sun-hermitage ; the shrine was known as badari, and the hermitage as badarikasram. Vaishnava pilgrims still do homage at the asram to the lord of the midnight sun who had guided the Aryan forebears from polar icebergs and icebears to wintry Himalay.

Sankara, now a peripatetic preacher and wandering wizard, came to Benares where he elucidated the thousand names of the sungod (vishnu-sahasra-nama). Paying a visit to his bed-ridden mother, he composed two rhapsodies in honor of Vishnu and Siva ; under the chakravarti's spell she passed away in peace. The stronghold of Siva-sankara is Benares where the god's namesake and devotee saw a student eagerly con the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar. The acharya took pity and warned: such technical research can never save the soul! And the master broke out in song : you foolish fellow, worship the divine shepherd! when your appointed hour comes, and death confronts you, no repetition of Panini's rules will release you from the bonds of ingrained nescience and illusion, but Govinda will!

Kamini-kanchana, renounced in this life, is the portal to sannyasa in the next. Sannyasis are born, and not made. In a mood of impatience with married men who turn sannyasis, Sankara annotated the Gita. Small talk, indispensable to burghers and bankers, was alien to his big nature ; he did not feel comfortable in social contacts. If Sankara lived now, he would detest western society, because women

dominate it. They will have to be reborn as men before attaining moksha, was one of his sayings.

One day the acharya went with Padmapada and other disciples to have the usual midday dip in the sacred river. In the narrow main street of Benares, a chandala with a scurvy dog passed them. Padmapada who hailed from Tanjore was of a vain and jealous disposition, but had unbounded faith in his sankha-shattering, doubt-destroying guru. He shouted: "clear the road, quick!" as brahmins do in Malabar to this day. The untouchable, ignoring the dictatorial disciple, turned to the master and said: "you teach adwaita, and are a prabhakara or bearer of light, yet your followers distinguish between noble-bred and mean-born, the high-browed and depressed, and order me to get out of your way! Is your gnana logical and consistent?" And the strange being (was he a messenger of Siva?) vanished. Sankara, struck by the pertinent remark, was entranced in samadhi. Coming back from nirvikalpa to normalcy, the master chanted the fivefold panegyric (panchaka-manisha). Each of the five inspired slokas ends: he who has learned to look on appearances in the adwaita spirit is my guru, be he dwija or chandala! such is my inmost conviction.

Sankara spent several years in Benares, with brief intervals when he chose religious seclusion in the celebrated Badarayana school in Badara. His great life work was planned and drafted, but the soul-sculptor had yet to mold the pliant marble into



maturer ideas. The immortal commentary on the Vedanta sutras deserves a place of honor by the side of Kant's Critiques or the Sum of Theology by Thomas Aquinas. Heated controversies arose on the sutras. Sankara was a skilled strategist, ambitious to draw even philosophical adversaries in his magic net (brahma-jala). Sometimes he would abandon an earlier position which seemed too advanced, and meet a rationalistic opponent half-way. Withdrawal for a time is not surrender, but a tactical measure. Adwaita, uncompromising and militant, temporarily retreated to a safer vantage-ground, to prepare more crushing attacks on the utilitarian and opportunist philosophies with which India then was teeming. Reculer pour mieux sauter! was Sankara's war-cry. He was now over 25, and made ready to leave Benares with a large number of followers. The raja urged him to stay, but the acharya excused himself: "my guru meant me to be an itinerant teacher; my mission is to travel and teach all over India." Ratan Singh then dismissed Sankara with rich gifts.

The prince of sannyasis first proceeded to Prayaga, and from there to Magadha where he disputed with a redoubted knight of karma-marga. This man of affluence mocked at Sankara's munda or shaven crown. From where are you, shaven (monk)? Sankara had a strong sense of humor, and hit back: from the neck upward! The purva-mimansist, finally defeated in the tourney of tongues, embraced

sannyasa. But Sankara plunged in yoga, and envisaged nri-sinha. The red lion or ruddy sun is manifest in rugged manhood ; lion-hearts are couching lions, are Vishnu! True Vedanta is not ego-centric, but altruistic, and demands fellow-service and sacrificial love from client-devotees. The new sannyasi and Padmapada heartily disliked each other ; both followed the master south.

Sankara preached in Maharatta-land and in the Tungabhadra valley. Then he toured the east coast, founded a math in Orissa, and successfully combated sakta abominations in the Madras State. Kali worship was cleansed, immoralities were checked, and whole communities felt drawn to gnana. On his return north, Sankara passed Berar, and stopped at Ujain where the bhairavas were all-powerful. Tantric orgies tortured and intoxicated their riotous imagination, until the majestic god was no longer auspicious (siva), but terrific. They almost mobbed Sankara, but as usual he triumphed in the end. The master founded Dwaraka math in Gujarat, lectured in the Gangetic plain, and won Buddhistic Kashmir over to adwaitism. After reforming the sakti cult in Assam, he retired to Badarikasram. Here Sankara organized another math and raised a temple to Narayana (the Arctic god in the year-ring ; deus in rota) on the site of the ancient sun-shrine and observatory. The master died in a Himalayan hill retreat after forty years of earth life or, maybe, of life in holy orders.

#### 4. Universal Religion

Age after age, new stacks have been added to Sankara's classical commentary by sages who cognized things of the spirit, and dared live up to the truth which they knew, regardless of the world's cheap sneers or empty praises. Creedless, yet benevolent to every creed, not competing with the world's religions, but supplying a common platform for all, Vedanta seems pre-eminently fit to function as a sort of international arbitration court between wrangling sects, and settle theological disputes without fear or favor. Every denomination within every faith is inclined to raise the war-cry: my creed alone is true, only my saviour is divine! But Vedanta, world-wide in its sympathies, points to the one divine life which is profusely conspicuous in all of God's messengers. They are sent, from age to age, to the soul-sick world to heal disease, and redeem those in bondage. Mankind perpetually relapses into error, and ever needs salvation. Moses and Mohammed, Buddha and Jesus, appeared when the race needed them most. Chaitanya and Ramakrishna fulfilled the same charitable mission of reclaiming erring mortals from gloom to light. Like ships furrowing the sea, these godmen left behind them a long and luminous trail which the restless waves of maya or cosmic nescience, time and again, effaced and obliterated. The cruel law of nature is inbred delusion and darkness, broken by an occasional streak of light. Vedanta focuses and films the spiritual

effulgence of all beliefs, great or small, from savage instincts to the radiant gospel light. The world's missionary religions are sober guides along life's tortuous path of sin and sorrow ; Vedanta unifies them all.

Sankara, the classical exponent of adwaita, contemplates unity beneath variety, and the gradual expansion of personal interests to a world-wide fellowship. Neo-Vedanta is more explicit on what he implies. Family, city, nation, race, all manners of comradeship, are successive steps on the social ladder. The consummation of ascent is a classless society where untouchable and inapproachable, kuli and colonel, are given equal opportunities of training, and their work is judged solely by efficiency and tried service. Class prejudices destroy unity and happiness ; coercion and oppression spread like rankling weeds. Self-glutted individualism scatters the poisonous seeds of injustice. National hatreds and rival armaments are vampires stalking about the dwaita world. Neo-Vedanta rejects social discrimination, and visualizes collective initiative. The one degrades, and the other dignifies modern mankind. The patriarchal household, feudal institutions and imperial expansion are so many milestones in the snail-progress of civilization. Liquidation of plutocracies and socialization of world-empires are the next historic stage; if not good-will, then another capitalistic war will effect the inevitable transition. Social planning is the anticlimax of private profiteering.

Vedanta merges things personal in the infinite ; the narrow current of love for home and country, blood-bound domesticity and militant patriotism must broaden until the heart overflows with sweet compassion for suffering humanity, and loses itself in the boundless sea of divine love. In order to account for the multiplicity of phenomena presented to the exterior senses, Sankara assumes one basic principle, and not two or more ; he is a non-dualist. Physical science affirms the interdependence of cosmic force and matter. Monotheists acknowledge a creator outside creation ; pantheists object to anything extra-cosmic, and believe that God is indwelling in everything. But all this is dualism. Sankara's monistic claim rests on the assumption that nature is in God, a transient shadow cast by deity, a wavering image of Him in whom all things have their prenatal germ and final resting-place.

Sankara is hostile to dull-witted materialism which identifies ultimate perfection with nature's inherent corruption and limitations ; and equally antagonistic to the narrow conception that mental energy, moral force and spiritual power are but mechanical vibrations of indestructible matter. Doomed is that person or nation that worships base matter, and dances round the golden calf. What more can the almighty dollar purchase than luxury and lasciviousness? As a rule, the neglected education of multi-millionaires benefits little from foreign travel. They are generally pampered and self-engrossed; too much money burdens

the mind quite as heavily as stark poverty. The best things pertain to heart and soul ; they are free gifts of the spirit, and can be had for nothing. A capitalistic civilization, without the background of artistic culture and humane endeavor, collapses, sooner or later, like a dwelling-house built on shifting, drifting sand.

All life is of God, Sankara teaches. The body is of flesh, but the soul is of God, and regenerate souls are one in Him. Moonbeams tremble on the silver-flooded hedge ; they are actual enough, yet have no reality apart from the lunar disc. They cannot shine unless the moon shines. Each individual, born anew by the spirit's sanctifying touch, is a ray of the universal soul, an outflow and reflection of the divine, a likeness of celestial glory, seen in a mirror darkly,

A heart renewed,  
And full of love divine,  
Simple and pure and true and good,  
A copy, lord, of thine.

Our true nature is divine. However dense the veil of selfishness, however thick the fumes of passion are which stifle the heavenly flame, they cannot quench, though they repress, the mystic fire which burns low or bright in every heart. Light is complete in itself, and does not depend on darkness; only it is more conspicuous in the dark. But darkness may be

changed to light. Each selfish impulse and indulgent act shuts out some of God's light, and adds another weight to the heavy chain which binds man to the prison-house of flesh.

The psychological current of sankhya-yoga, flooding the new theology, is broad and deep, but the spiritual torrents of Vedanta are more rapid and translucent. In their fearless rush after truth they hurl the soul along, heedless of earthly obstacles which might impede progress. Is Vedanta older than Sankhya? The idle question has been hotly contested, though the answer is simple enough. Unsystematized Sankhya, the hoary source of Buddhist psychology, precedes and antedates Sankara's harvest of Indian wisdom. But his imperishable commentary, the bedrock of universal religion, is chronologically anterior to the coherent texts of the brainy and bracing Sankhya schools.

## 5. S e m b l a n c e a n d S u b s t a n c e

Heaven and hell are watchwords of the Christian church ; being and non-being, sat and asat, are the keynote and prompting catchword of Vedanta. Even such exquisite qualities as omniscience, omnipotence and perfect goodness, seem inadequate to brahma or god, unworthy of deity which is absolute rather than personal. Knowledge and love presuppose objects to be known and loved. To connote the

infinite with things earth-bound and circumscribed shows crude reasoning. A creator, conscious of creation, and blessing his creatures, implies a qualification of the unqualified which is pure being (sat), absolute consciousness (chit) and perfect bliss (ananda). Sat-chit-ananda, the three in one, coequal and uncreate, is a predicate which neither confines nor modifies the One without a second ; the tripartite word signifies the cream and essence of brahma in the Vedanta philosophy. Human happiness, knowledge and existence, compared to sachchidananda, are but idle dreams and flitting shadows. Fish in the sea, birds in the air, angels and men, all things created, breathe in you! not transitory life, relative thought and earthly bliss, is your triune name, o father (pitar) of light (dyau), but transcendent glory, pure reason and blessedness itself! The Vedic vocative and invocation dyau-pitar recurs among the old Romans as Ju-piter, and in Homeric song as father Zeus. Latin relatives of Sanskrit dyaus are dies (daylight) and deus (god of light ; French dieu). Latin "d" dovetails with English "t" ; the numeral duo to two, and deus to tiu. The pagan Anglo-Saxons worshiped god Tiu, and consecrated Tuesday to the eternal source of light and life.

Does the student of Indian literature remember Satyakama, the truthful boy, and Sati, the true wife?<sup>1</sup> The neuter form of sati is sat which means "the true",

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1. See the author's Short History of Indian Literature.



or quite literally "what is." Truth "is," but untruth is non-existent, a mere vapor and delusion of an overheated or distorted brain. Sat is the ever-present, but asat is absent from a noble soul. Falsehood and naughtiness are asat. In the beginning arose desire, the primal germ and seed of organic life; sages who diligently search their hearts discover sat hid in asat.

The transient world as it appears to the five senses is asat ; changeless reality, the essence of all individuality, is sat. The senses can only cognize asat or outward phenomena which are conditioned by space and time, and have to submit to the law of evolution and causality. What bud, bee, babe really are, the senses can never know. Earth life with its keen joys and sorrows is asat. We are asat, imperfect. The perfect is outside of history and geography, and never changes. We change, and have reached various stages of growth. And it is because we are more or less advanced, none equally gifted, that so different views of life are taken. A painter's eye sees finer shades, a musician's ear detects subtler tones, a poet's radiant fancy is more alert and intuitive, a philosophic mind is clearer about the nature and reason of things than ordinary mortals are. Some people seem to have lost all sense of harmony and color which beautify nature. Others lack tact or brain or, worse still, are heartless. Yet there is unity behind all the variety of gifts and deficiencies. There is concord above the clash of endless opinions. Great souls, indeed, have overcome their rebellious nature, and step by step have

risen to the heights of sat, the Christ-plane, where differences melt in oneness of vision. But all who love the life of the senses are held in bondage by asat. He who loves his life shall lose it, but those who loathe it shall keep it unto life everlasting. Alas, we love our chains, they tinkle sweetly. We have grown fond of the gilded prison-bars like caged birds that never felt the wild thrill and throb of freedom.

Such is the teaching about sat. It is Aryan wisdom, worked out independently in India, Greece and Germany, the three headquarters of the world's metaphysics. Vedanta, Plato and Kant have reached the same conclusion almost in identical terms.

SANSKRIT

tat sat

GREEK

to on

GERMAN

das sein

ENGLISH

the ever-present,

or omitting the article, and using the root-form :

sant

sont

seind

sent;

the sum-total and supreme equation of Indo-European wisdom.

Book-learning has little spiritual value. In the library the flower of viveka withers rather than discloses its power and bloom. The test of maturity is discrimination between what is accidental and essential. Reality, absolute, yet at the root of all manifestation, is beyond the ken of the senses, and passes human understanding. Reality is our very self, the soul of our soul. Learning alone cannot reach it, mere scholars

do not know it, but the pure in heart know sat! hridayena janati satyam; through the heart a man knows truth (Great Jungle Upanishad 3,9,23).

## 6. Nature's Moods

The quality of sat is satya or truth. Sattwa or truthfulness ultimately coincides with purity and goodness. Fruits of sattwa are calmness and forbearance. Virtue is born of goodness (sattwa); vice of indolence. The germs of purity lie embedded in human nature; by their side sleep the seeds of lethargy from which the weeds of malice and wickedness sprout forth. The virile and vital are apt to be restless and impatient. Energy is the source of dash and push, self-assertion and aggressiveness, the hustling and fighting spirit. In the prime of life, vigor predominates in the average man; inactivity shows up in evil hours of gloom and despondency; sattwa in moments of soul elation and success. To a certain degree, selection of food is responsible for the distribution of nature's three moods or dispositions. Ripe fruit and sweet grain are productive of sattwa particles; meat and alcohol stimulate energy and passion, while high game, decomposed food, or anything taken to excess, generate dulness and sloth.

"When sattwa prevails at the hour of death, the departing soul soars aloft; energy is the cause of rebirth among men, and indolence leads to the wombs of the deluded," perhaps even of dumb beasts, says

the Gita 14,14-15. Or to use the sober language of Christianity: every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree evil fruit.

The Song of Destiny, far from indulging in glib platitudes, climbs sublime altitudes like the Sweta Upanishad. The same congregation of ascetics or sannyasis composed both anthologies in the same age. Gita and Sweta are eclectic ; their literary style is finished, their poetic diction choice and popular. There is a Platonic ring and swing, a Gospel touch and tone about the swelling organ sounds of the Gita.

## XI. GOSPEL AND GITA

Wilamowitz has written by far the best life of Plato. Previous biographers have laboriously analyzed every sentence penned by the master of western metaphysics, but Plato fades out of sight, a nebulous figure, shrouded in erudite annotations and learned arguments. Wilamowitz (1849-1931) colorfully depicts the fierce struggles, noble achievements and bitter disappointments of the towering lonesome giant. For the first time Plato the man emerges from grey clouds of theory and theology. The centre of Platonic research has long shifted from Athens to the more critical universities of the once barbaric north. It is the same with Vedic learning; Benares is left behind by Berlin and Paris. Vivekananda once said that swamis and sadhus alone could not carry on his work; they would have to collaborate with the practical western mind which is ready to materialize and utilize the world-wide aims of Neo-Vedanta.

Plato defines visible things as images or expressions of an ideal prototype. Darwin supplements the Greek idealist when he postulates homogeny, underlying every variety of grouped and graded matter; all species have the selfsame origin. Individuals reflect the generic, and genus springs from still more remote and hidden sources; the ramified currents may be traced to a primary cause. Darwin's speculations

were restricted to physical nature; Plato's wider search staged a causal setting for nature as well as culture. The lucid Athenian preferred the clear light of Ionian science to twilight mysticism, so welcome to lazy, hazy and irrational minds. The third century witnessed a theosophic movement which claimed a mystic realization of life's archetype. Enraptured with that arcanum and Open Sesame before which the door of supreme reality flies open, Platonists yearned for self-communion with the eternal type which they adored as a perfect pattern and exemplar of defective humanity. Their utter self-abasement and sacrificial love on the altar of Plato's ideal laid the foundation to the holy sacrament of Christian communion. The early church and Neo-Platonism were keen rivals for spiritual hegemony in the debased ancient world. But the negative and contemplative attitude of pagan philosophers could not save the sinking ship of Roman imperialism and capitalism from moral shipwreck. Practical Christianity, linking and conciliating God and man in the godman, brought mysticism from heaven unto earth, and triumphed ; the Incarnation was hailed as the divine healer who alone remedies personal pride, power and profiteering.

Resemblances between the Gospels and the Gita are quite as striking as between Platonism and Christianity. The gentile spirit bears a closer affinity to Hellenes and Hindus than to Hebrews.

In the beginning was the Word, the only-begotten of the father ; St. John 1, 14. Creation is

a divine expression, the utterance or word of God. In the beginning was Brahma, the first-begotten (prathama-ja), the golden germ of the father, according to the Great Jungle Upanishad. Brahma signifies thought bursting into rhythmic expression, also prayer breaking forth from the inmost soul.

The Word was made flesh; divine thought flashed forth and dwelt among us. The Chandogya Upanishad affirms that eternal life travails with sound and shape, but the infinite display of nama-rupa, name and form, is really Brahma. "What they are internally, that is Brahma, that is immortal!" (yad antaras, tad Brahma, tad amritam). Form includes the tangible creation. Name embraces all possible ideas of a productive mind, the whole mental empire. Poetry and philosophy are name; physical science deals with form. Pindar and Plato were nominalists; Newton and Darwin formalists.

Gospel and Gita apparently contradict, but really supplement one another. The Gospels admonish: love your neighbour as yourself! The Gita counsels: recognize yourself in your neighbor! From the New Testament we know that the human heart is naturally corrupt; Christ alone can make it whole. And the Gita adds that unaided reason is a deceptive light; self-realization alone can rectify the original error, and atone for hereditary sin.

The only way to reach the father is through the son. Self-will has to be renounced. Regeneration of the will is the mystic birth of the Christ in us. The

first man, self-will, is of earth, earthy ; the second, the resigned will, is the lord from heaven. Unregenerate man, the old Adam, lives the natural life of the five senses, but risen man is world-detached and god-centred. Christian believers, by virtue of their faith, are one in Christ, partakers of his sonship and eternal life. And the Gita promises that all who know themselves to be Brahma, by virtue of that knowledge, become Brahma.

• Gospel and Gita often differ in the letter, but agree in spirit. The one dispenses with the Mosaic law, and the other with Vedic rites, on the ground that holy sacrifice and even a blameless life are insufficient to redeem the soul from perdition. A moral code without a spiritual basis is ineffectual. Even the loftiest ethics, if divorced from religion, are unreal like a castle in the clouds. A far deeper chord than synagogue or ethical society can touch rings in the apostle's saying that no good dwells in the flesh, and that God alone works in the heart his eternal will and pleasure. Of mine own I can do nought for my salvation except sanctify my will. What I need is grace, my natural self being disgraced, and out of tune with the divine plan and law. I am foul by nature, conceived in sin,

• Born with a personal debt which I must pay ;  
 All scores are chalked against the reckoning  
 • • • day.

Christian Vedantists, in their eagerness to reconcile



Gospel and Gita, reason that our sufferings in the flesh, as far as they are not results of youthful folly, originate from prenatal shortcomings. That is their interpretation of original sin. Christian Platonists held a theory, wilder still: mutual attraction between two incarnate souls manifests as sex love ; so does affinity between an unborn soul and earthly parents who vibrate in harmony with that soul. At the time of rebirth, imperfect souls feel drawn to a father of congenial character, and to a mother mentally attuned. Like dispositions draw like. Neo-Platonism explains hereditary transmission as elective affinity. The notion of transmigration is not absent from the Gospels. The question put to Jesus by his disciples (St. John 9, 2) indicates that belief in pre-existence was not uncommon among them. Mortality moves between the cradle and the coffin, but eternal soul is immune from birth and death. Soul "is," always has been, and always shall be, world without end.

Earth-life is a penalty inflicted, a cross to be borne, a fallen state which calls for redemption. The object of the Christian life is not riches nor being held in good report, but blessed are they that choose poverty and mourning, and who shall be reviled and persecuted because they dare be true to their highest aspirations, and want to live the Christ-life.

If I find him, if I follow,  
What can I gain here?

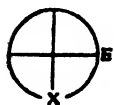
Many a labor, many a sorrow,  
Many a tear!

We are begotten in sin, the Gospels affirm ; we are born in nature's magic and in cosmic illusion, the Gita maintains. The senses cheat, and make believe that appearances are real. As long as we rely on the untrusty evidence, we are in the dark ; entrapped by magic (maya). Distrust in sense impressions, faith in a reality beyond the world of sense, identification of the sunrays with the sun, is the first awakening (prabodha) from the perturbed dreams of natural life. Doubt in the things we see, and belief in the unseen, are the incipient birthpangs and forebodings of the new life, the changed life in the spirit. Prince Krishna reveals this truth ; the Gita extols him as a godman. His divinity is unbegotten, incorruptible, indestructible. Krishna's human personality, embodied for the benefit of mankind, is ready for future incarnations, whenever a healer and benefactor be needed in this world of violence and venture, relapse and collapse. Christ also ideally existed since the beginning of time, hidden in the bosom of the father. " Before Abraham was I am " (Fourth Gospel). " I am before the gods were," exclaims uncreate atma (spirit) in the Tittiri Upanishad. " I am the first-begotten in the cosmic order", proclaims incarnate atma in the preceding sentence. Atma is our spiritual nature, and at the same time the Holy Spirit, inspiring and uplifting ; the sanctifying touch of God. Nature and spirit,

human will and divine grace, death and immortality, exclude one another. Hence every god-sent teacher appears to be brimful of contradictions. Has he not to persuade natural men and women that they are spiritual? to convince slaves that they are free, and mortals that they are immortal?

## XII. THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

To allot land, apportion food, distribute light, is the basic conception of the Sanskrit noun "bhaga" which means sun as well as lot and good fortune. Bhaga, the Vedic sungod, deals out all good things, sunshine, pasturage and fodder. Anglo-Russian kindred are "beech" and "bog". Beechnut and acorn, baked into bread, were one of the staple foods in nomadic households, prior to the cultivation of grain ; beechmast was the daily bread of the roving berserks or Norse hunters, wrapt in shaggy bearskins. Bog, dispensation of providence, is the Pan-Slavic word for God. In Arctic rites and archaic symbols, Bhaga, the guardian of rita or cosmic order, spins the changing seasons (ritu) round the chakra or year-ring.



X stands for Xmas or the winter solstice ; E for the east or Easter. Bhaga, turning the wheel of fortune, is bhagavat (disposer of fate) and chakravat (rolling the sun-wheel). His thoroughbreds, the ever-recurring seasons, race in the ring. Yuletide, gript by winter's gloom, waiting for vernal bloom, is the sepulchre and matrix of the new light. The Xmas twilight or twilight is personified in Vedic sagalore as the aswins or heavenly twins ; the cavaliers escort the dying northern light across X, the breach and bridge of the year-ring,

unto the Easter resurrection. The winged light and the aswin-cavalcade are forced to pass *durga*, the dark and difficult crossing. A Rig prayer (7, 41, 5) runs: may *Bhaga* be our *bhagavat* (apportioner), and bestow ample *bakshish* (portions) in the lottery of life! *Bhagavat* is spelt *bhagavad* before the letter "g". *Bhagavad Gita* may be rendered "song of destiny" or "song of the sun." *Chakravat*, a word-stump with the same suffix as *bhagavat*, is conventionally translated disc-bearer; images of the sungod hold a disc. In fact, *chakravat* is a linguistic torso of *chakravarti* (*cyclum vertens*); "deus in rota" rolls the year-ring, or turns the *chakra*, from the shades of polar night along the trail of light (*devayana*), and once more out of sight.

*Et antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui!*

In old figures typified, newer rites of grace abide. During *tenebrae*, the churches are darkened; the light of the world, safely delivered from time's tomb and womb, remains hidden until Eastertide. A Rig verse darkly alludes to sunless *Arctis* where *bhaga*, the northern light, scatters the weary long darkness (*dirgha tamisra*; Latin *tenebrae*). *Krishna-bhagavat* is an incarnation of *Vishnu* the sungod; his followers are the *bhagavatas* or *bhaktas*. The Great Epic locates them in the vast silence of the White Zone (*sweta-dwipa*) which encompasses *meru*, the north pole. In the Interglacial Age, the circumpolar belt enjoyed a genial and healthy climate; vegetation was profuse. Daylight lingers in brief summer nights

which turn silvery in the boreal afterglow. The hands of the celestial timepiece move sunward from the dead days of dread winter along the trail of the shining gods, and back again to the abode of the departed (pitriyan), world without end, in saecula saeculorum. Pitriyan or, to revive a word which has dropped out of use, matriyan (way to the matrix of light) is the southern passage (dakshinayan). All of a sudden the polar dawn (ushas) blazes forth in virginal splendor and beauty; the rosy-fingered maid is of all maidens the fairest.<sup>1</sup> The bhaktas of Sweta-dwipa exchanged at the festive season yule-greetings and mutual goodwill; many happy turns of the chakra, many happy returns of the year! Sw-asti, it is well! wohl-sein! in German. The cross in the ring (deus in rota) is the oldest script, and mother of every alphabet. The polar design looks like a lucky horse-shoe; mankind's

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1. Rig Veda 1, 113. The gorgeous northern light was toned down in India to the liquid lucidity of morning skies; the great annual event became a daily occurrence. As the Punjab panorama is lifted from the silence of the night, wood and stream are dipped in a soft grey, announcing the dawning day. "The landscape stands out from the unfolding picture, first dim and misty, then marked by twilight's witchery, at last mellow, distinct and luminous, as the rays of the great centre of light diffuse themselves, and bathe the vast prospect in that deep joy which Beethoven has eternalized in his choral symphony. Sad evening reveries, overshadowed by dark doubts, are in tune with the low twitter of birds retreating to their roost, or flying to their nest. But the glad matin carols of the feathered throng scatter all melancholy moods, and sanctify the uplifted heart. A halo overspreads the creation. Moral truth presents itself in unadorned simplicity."

talisman or horoscope lives on in Christendom as the sign of the cross and the crucifix. Greek Catholics



trace the sign of the cross from the right shoulder to the left ; Roman communicants cross themselves from left to right. All who paid homage to Buddha walked round him with their right side (dakshina ; Gaelic dessil) toward his sacred person. Thrice did druids proceed dessil (sunward) round departed heroes at the burial service, while magicians with sinister intent took a leftward course. Symbolism gave the god in the ring index-fingers, showing the direction; the world-old swastika or arctic sansara-sign suggests birth, death and resurrection, the three steps or footmarks in the sands of time. Disintegration and regeneration ever alternate even as fall showers and spring flowers.

### XIII. NARAYANA

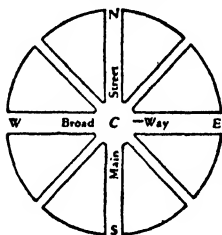
In the last Ice Age, Swetadwipa, a prey to snow-drift and blizzard, was unfit for occupancy. The equipoised bhaktas, neither elated in good fortune nor dismayed in adversity, the soul's touchstone, quitted the northern nest, and sought warmer abodes. These narasinghs or heroes, endowed with lion's strength, grappled desperately with raging Arctic seas (aughā; the Ogygian flood) and deadly polar bears (riksha). On frozen drift, in storm-swept rift, the big-game hunters bagged the snowy giants who during hibernation live on their surplus fat; many a narasingh, forgotten and unrecorded, was lacerated by bearish claws, and hugged to death in silver paws. At last the daring mariners and migrants gained a temperate zone. Some reached Ararat, and others the windy heights of Elburz, aloud with circling eagles' screech and the muffled roar of panthers. Manu, the Indian Noah, landed or stranded on a sky-dipt peak of wintry Himalay amid dark tall pines, pluming the craggy ledge high over a blue gorge. Bhakti entered India. The clean theism of the narabhaktas stamps the ancient fire-cult of the sane Parsis, that social gem and ornament of progressive Bombay, and the benign Brahmo-Samaj, founded 1828 by Ram Mohun Roy who liké Voltaire and Kant blended rationalism with deism. The narabhaktas commemorated the ancestral



exodus from the Arctis as "path (ayana) of the heroes (nara)"; they fathered on Narayana, their fabled sire in prehistoric Swetadwipa, all those perilous exploits and thrilling ventures; ordained by fate and fortune (bhaga). When Vivekananda was 18, he first visited Dakshineswara; his future master took the young hero aside, and greeted him as an incarnation of Narayana. Twenty years later, the beloved disciple entertained a group of Santals, once proud Tatar hunters, but now poor rice-hullers and turf-diggers in Bengal. Vivekananda saluted them: "You are Narayana; today I invited him to dinner."—The northern light does not shine in Aryavarta, but is kept in loving memory; the antediluvian saga-figures of Ushas and Vishnu paled to the dawn-maiden and the sungod.

In the Punjab the bhakta-invaders met with bloody repulses, before they subjugated the flat-nosed Tatars who widely diverged, tent from tent, in color and culture. The sons of Narayana were struck with the quick (druta) horsemanship of their falcon-eyed foes whom they named Dravids. The Aryans cut down vanaspatis or jungle trees; the enormous stumps, with roots laid bare by the removal of the soil, made the rugged passage over dark and uncertain roads both difficult and dangerous. Year after year the hardy pioneers advanced their go-purs or cattle-pens, and fortified the circular enclosures, until these primitive strongholds covered the entire Five-River-Land. Skilled sthapatis or craftsmen erected Vishnu shrines at the gopurs (which came to mean gates) of each Vedic

pur or settlement. Eastgate was consecrated to sunrise, Southgate to the noonday blaze, and Westgate to sundown; the three strides of the sungod symbolize aspects of the energizing and life-preserving orb of light.<sup>1</sup>



"The spinning-wheel with triple (tripad) force strikes the three portals in due course!" The wheel (chakra) is the year-ring. There is a variant of the nursery rhyme: "when stars are hushed, the sungod's oar strikes in succession each cow-door (go-pur)."

The three sun-observatories (E. S. W.), struck by Vishnu's shaft of light, were in the first place openings, wide enough to let the cattle pass to the outlying grazing plains. The dak-bungalow, adjoining Southgate, was a rest and guest house for weary wayfarers. The northern gate was dedicated to the land of the midnight sun whence intrepid pathikrits, undaunted pathfinders, vigilant like the pontiffs of pagan Rome, had led the sturdy sires along the Path of Heroes to Indo-Iranian prairies and pastures. Main Street and Broadway, the principal thoroughfares, were originally little better than rough and unhewn wood-paths; they intersected each other at right angles, and met at the centre (C) or village green where a sapling, the tree of wisdom, was planted. The master-builder laid out the two arteries in the shape of a cross; he fixed the

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1. The three-legged or three-armed Manx triskele is a Celtic repercussion of the three steps of Vishnu.

location of the gopurs, and oriented the village boundaries by the shadow of a gnomon. Hindu geometry originated from town planning. Each pur had four quarters and four gateways, the four minor exits being located NE, NW, SE and SW. Buddha's eightfold path of salvation, constituting the fourth and final "Aryan truth," has an economic and historic setting.<sup>1</sup> In the shade of the bo-tree or tree of wisdom municipal pol-itics (pur-affairs) were publicly discussed. As time went on, the ancestral bo-tree was enlarged to a log hut with a council fire. This kind of deliberative assembly hall, still primitive, developed to a pillared pavilion, open on all four sides, and decorated with statuettes of the four loka-palas or local patrons. At the high festivals of the two solstices and the two equinoxes, the bhakta-burghers of Iran and India invoked the tribal saints to guard the four main gates, and protect the pur.<sup>2</sup>

A pure Indo-Iranian blood community hardly ever existed. From the days when Aryans clashed and contacted with aliens, intermarriage and illicit bond were inevitable; after the Punjab conquest the ties

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1. A Christian counterpart to Buddha's attitude toward life and its plannings occurs in the epistle to the Ephesians 6, 13-17.

2. Nature tends to rounded forms. The simplest and yet most perfect geometric figure is the circle. The earth swings round the sun, and the moon round the earth; all three are spherical in appearance. Dew-drop and rose-bud, foliage and fruit, eye and ear, skull and shell,—the finest works of nature are round or oval. So are egg and nest, tent and town.

grew closer, and increased enormously. Not even the Vedic age could claim *sangre azul* or blue blood, despite rigid caste rules and intricate marriage laws. Blood intermingled freely, and the admixture proved healthful. It is a fallacy of bourgeois scientists to divide mankind into higher and lower races, because of different brain formations. The dogma of inequality on physical grounds is artificial and arbitrary. A sounder racial test than brain ridge or blood pigment is language. The baptism of the tongue is the first paper of full citizenship. A thorough command of French gives a touch of the French temperament. There are cultural divergences between speakers of Sanskritic and Dravidian languages; the views of a Punjabee are not always the same as those of a Madrasee.

#### XIV. MOTHER KALI

Aryan patriarchs believed in the fatherhood of God; Dravidian matriarchs worshiped the divine mother. The house-father (*dam-pati*) was the lawful authority in each Vedic household; he left the patrimony and patronymic or family name to the eldest son or anyway to a male member. The nucleus of Dravidian society was the mother who often had several husbands at the same time, hunters or trappers from various tribes. Patriarchate and polygamy are Aryan institutions ; matriarchate and polyandry characterize the early Dravids. An epical remnant of Dravidism is the marriage of the five Pandava brothers to one princess ; the name almost dovetails with the historic Pandyas, settled opposite Ceylon on Dravidian soil.<sup>1</sup> Again lists of teachers are appended to the oldest Upanishads; most names in these traditional records are matronymics. French "*patrie*" and the German fatherland re-echo the Aryan patriarchate,

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1. The heroic age ended with the defeat and destruction of the shamefully defamed Kauravas. They were the real heroes rather than the eulogized Pandava brothers who like Pandya pearl-fishers did not know their sires, and adopted "celestial" fathers. In the oldest version of the national poem, Duryodhan championed right and honor, virtue and truth. A benign deity miraculously translated the valiant and fearless knight (like many a Homeric hero), in the hour of extreme danger, to a place of safety. But the Vishnuite recast of the epic brands king Duryodhan as a contemptible coward who fled from the battlefield, and ignominiously

while the expression " mother country " goes back to the Pictish matriarchate; the war-paint of the ancient Britons is but a retouch of Tatar tattoo.

The Lord's Prayer in the Rig Veda begins: Dyau-pitar, our father which art in heaven! The Dravids in the Vedic age did not pray to father sky, but propitiated with human sacrifices mother earth, the fertile matrix of created life. Saiva brahmins mated mother Kali to Siva; the crude earth-mother was co-ordinated to the sky which shows a different face throughout the twelve months, benign in smiling summer, and sinister in howling winter gales. The Kali sanctuary with which Ramakrishna was associated adjoined twelve Siva temples. The offering of human blood to the grim goddess in times of stress and distress became ever rarer, although Kali's child-victims are still mentioned by Bhavabhuti. The centre of Dravidian kraals, a public hall with a sacrificial block, was dedicated to Kali. Any rustic, opposing the authority of the village elders, risked death or lifelong banishment. The number of outlaws grew rapidly. Many would band together, terrorize the land, engage in daring creaghs or cattle raids, kidnap peasant girls, and carry them off to the mountains

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concealed himself in a pond; even as the dying northern light is hid in the big yule pond. Deva-intervention in human affairs is a common feature in the Iliad, but the "enlightened" rationalists who re-edited the Maha-bharata supplied natural causes for superhuman acts. They largely destroyed the poetic unity and romantic flash of the deathless hero-sages of old.

(parvata), to some lonesome pur or station.<sup>1</sup> These bandit strongholds were *durga* or inaccessible. Among the highland robbers, *Durga* and *Parvati* became favorite names of the grim mother of the impervious uplands. Rape and murder, sex orgy and sufferings on the block, marked the Dravidian cult of *Durga-Parvati*. But the Saivas or Sivaists ennobled the concept of mother *Kali*, the lady of the mountain.

Aryan settlers dreaded and detested these ferocious forest footpads, *Durga's* Dravidian devotees, as very *rakshasas* or devils. In the *Ramayan* which contains old Vedic lore *Ravan* leads the *rakshasa* or demon host. Yet among the roving bands of outlaws many a *Robin Hood* arose, and with him loftier ideals of kingship and wedlock. A looting gang would look up to a comrade, full of resource and dare-devilry, as a perfect raid-director (*raj*). A woman, taken by a robber-chief, might remain the captor's sole property and only wife. In Hindu law, the *rakshasa* form of marriage, appropriated by the warrior-caste, rests on the right of capture.

The Vedic victors in the Dravidian Punjab were fair-skinned and strong-limbed. They ate meat, drank mead, loved life and liberty, were fond of mirth and melody. They did not adore dread *Durga*, but mild *Mitra*, another world-old appellation of the sungod. The Indo-Iranian name recurs in ancient inscriptions found in the Near East. The *bhaktas* minded hygiene

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1. Acro-pol-is is the Greek for hill-fort or hill station.

and health; strict sanitary laws were enforced in purs. Stock-raising and farming constituted the chief means of livelihood; predatory excursions added excitement to the monotonous life of a gentleman-farmer. Spiritual directors abhorred and abominated human sacrifices; altar offerings came to be restricted to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The social life of Aryans and Dravidians commingled ever more. Bloody Durga, the goddess of brigands and bandits, had been wedded to father sky, destroyer of darkness; her second husband was Siva who destroys error and imparts wisdom. Everywhere the Aryan husbandman educated and edified the untrained Tatar huntsman. Arjun, one of the Pandava brothers, was tutored and directed by an Aryan plowman; Krishna's name has grown out of the Sanskrit root krish, to plow. Agriculture gave culture to the Pandyas or Dravids of the Dekhan. Their folk-songs and village dances revived Krishnaism which, in its turn, spiritualized Dravidian music and melodies. Shepherds danced with village lasses, the gopa with the gopis, in the bonnie glades of Vrindavana Forest.

Durga, the lady of the mountain, was identified with Kali, all-mother of the universe. She is maya, the mold and matrix of manifest life, and removes from her sons the inbred desire for kamini-kanchana, until they see in every woman their own mother, and regard wealth as a temporary trust, involving constant obligations and responsibility. Kali, the dread darling-mother, is both baneful and beautiful, hellish and



heavenly. Her name is etymologically related to "hell" and celestial. In the Arctic nest, Kali signified the polar night which conceals and reveals the boreal light (Siva; Ulysses). Kalypso, beloved by Ulysses, is hidden in Ogygia (Sanskrit *augha*). In India, Siva was identified with Yama who works death and destruction; the *dwara-pala* or janitor to the new year shuts the solstitial door on the defunct season. Siva became the spirit of self-slaughter in the sense of self-abasement and self-effacement. Kali dances on his prostrate body, until the golden butterfly is released from the chrysalis of the slain ego. Saivas dying to themselves are Siva; they idolize what he represents. The historicity of gods counts little, compared to their inner meaning. National ideals crystallize round holy names. Vivekananda worshiped Krishna as an adorable incarnation, but doubted whether the *bhagavat* ever existed except in the conception of yearning votaries.

## XV. BHAKTI

The bhagavatas confronted a changed world beset with new dangers and difficulties. Their monotheism was dynamic enough not to harden to convention and tradition. Monists like Swetaketu's father belong to a much later phase of philosophic thought than bhakti. Non-dualists ignore a personal Bhagavat, and regard appearances, apart from the underlying reality, as non-existent. When the senses ignore nature's ties, and consciousness withdraws from human relationships, then the contemplating soul in splendid isolation realizes its nothingness and void apart from God. Immersion in the divine essence (sat) releases from further transmigration. You are that essence, tat twam asi!

The erudite speculations of non-dualists or monists were too cold and abstract, too ascetic and eccentric, to gain a hold on the Indian masses. Their heart yearned for human fellowship and dependence on a personal god. They longed for the communion of saintly souls, and for a divine personality, loving, befriending and pardoning repentant sinners. Their notion of salvation was neither absorption nor self-annihilation, but rather wrongs forgiven, and individuality retained beyond the grave. Nestorian Christians, silently, but busily, instilled the need of faith and grace in the Hindu mind. Bhakti, the

ancient legacy of the narasingshs, became the religion of the people; devotion to the lord was dearer to them than chilly flights and speculations of non-dualists. In order to fortify the growing bhakti movement, the Gita was composed and incorporated in the Great Epic. Bhakti crystallized round the person of Krishna, a saga-hero like Rama, the ideal knight in the sister-epic. Nestorian influences transfigured Bhagavat-Krishna to the image of Christ. The faithful revere the Govinda or Good Shepherd who is ever willing to gather lost sheep in his flock. To serve the loving Govinda on earth, and after death to enjoy his company in heaven, is the dream and ideal of every good Krishnaist. When Prahlada forgot his individual self, he saw neither the universe nor its cause, but only unity, unconditioned by name and form. But on remembering that he was Prahlada, creation stood before him, and with it the builder of the cosmos with countless glorious qualities. As long as the blessed gopis or shepherdesses lost the sense of individuality, all of them were Krishna, their beloved. But when they recollected the one adorable bhagavat, they were gopis again, and the divine shepherd-boy immediately appeared before them, with a smile on his face, and a flute on his lips, in yellow robes, with fragrant wreaths, radiant and triumphant like the archer-god. Poets fondly dwell on Krishna's dalliance with the gopis; his cult lent itself to lax and lascivious practices.

Bhakti is abandonment to a divine incarnation. Christian worship is largely bhakti. The bhakta or

lover sees heaven's beauty reflected in rock and tree  
and flower, and hears the music of the spheres resound  
in melodious echoes of murmuring breezes and the  
ocean's roar.

## XVI. RAMAISM

When Krishnaism deviated to a sensuous religion, Rama-devotees, among all Hindu sectarians the purest in life and doctrine, gained power through bhakti. Their theism is also tinged with Christian conceptions of divine love, and in its turn has colored the new theology. The mystical rhapsodies of Neo-Buddhists re-echo the ecstatic outbursts of Ramaism.

“ I adore you, jewel in the lotus! I know nothing of you except that you are my love. You are beautiful indeed; you are eternal beauty itself. Every face beams on me because I see your celestial brightness imprinted on all features. Whatever is noble and lovely and of good report, is a touch and taste of your own Ramahood. The wise say, you are infinite, but I prefer to think of you as personal, so that I may better love you. I feel blest, and am blind to everything outside you, my Rama! I can see nothing, but you, my love supreme, my only love! Hail, jewel in the lotus, hail!”

Such is the language of superb devotion. The great lover is conscious of growing, from image to image, into the likeness of his lord. Rama works in him as Christ works in Christian hearts. The parabhakta realizes the divine touch and spark in all created things. He loves them all, and is blest even in this mortal life. The play and passion of the

rambling senses, fads and fancies, illusion and delusion, are blown-out (nir-vana). The devotee sails on the great vehicle of bhakti to the eternal shore. Nirvana is a condition of the soul when all evil fires of passion, and the thick fumes of selfishness, are extinguished, when vain attachment is swept away and mortified, when the seeds of rebirth are "fried" and devitalized. Without religious aspiration and divine grace, the natural world is indeed vanity and void. Whatever is idle and null cannot be nirvana, cannot be the kingdom of heaven. Ramaism assimilated Christian conceptions, and sunk bhakti, the religion of love, deep in Buddhist consciousness.

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In the twelfth century, Ramanuj once more popularized the moral loftiness of the hero-sons of Narayana; that gnani and bhakta-bee of the Dekhan laid the honey of sun-devotees in a new Vedanta cell. His monism was no longer unalloyed, but qualified. The godhead, proclaimed by Sankara, is absolute, and transcends even the sublimest attributes. But Ramanuj preached a personal brahma, all-knowing and almighty, of boundless goodness and mercy. Outside Benares and Allahabad there are now but few Vedantists who follow Sankara. Most non-dualists accept the authority of Ramanuj. But the elaborate systems of neither can be called popular, since the two famous commentators of Badarayan's Vedanta aphorisms both wrote in dead

Sanskrit, and thus deprived the religious masses from reading their compositions, and profiting by the constructive philosophy, deposited in these learned annotations to the Brahma Sutras.

About fifth in descent from Ramanuj, in the line of bhakti teachers, came Ramanand. His religious poetry, penned in Hindi, discloses a more human side of divine love and worship. He calls all men children of God; bhaktas love the lord and their fellow-men even as themselves. The vulgar vernaculars, once spurned by Sankara and Ramanuj, now scattered Ramanand's new faith broadcast over India. Henceforth some of the finest poets and prosaists were men of low caste, and ignorant of Sanskrit. Spiritual thought was quickened and diverted from exaltation to humility, from self-sufficiency to self-abandonment, from wisdom to love, from gnana to bhakti.

Ramanand sang his songs near Agra, in the holy land of Krishnaism. His disciple was Kabir, a weaver in Benares. Kabir's pithy sayings molded and shaped the bracing monotheism of the military Sikhs in north-western India. Ramaism became the most potent force in Hinduism toward 1600 when Tulsi Das recast the old Rama epic in Hindi verse. He showed fervent souls how to lose themselves in the love of Rama, and thus gain everlasting life. The poet never reasoned on faith, or bound the absolute down to intellectual formulas. The Sanskrit Rama is a saintly hero-king; Tulsi's is a divine incarnation, listening to the prayers of the broken-hearted and sorrowful. The

tender melodies merge finite lights and shadows in the full harmony of the infinite. A single line quoted from Tulsi Das unlocks the hearts, and wins Hindu affection, more than the most intimate acquaintance with non-dualist scholasticism. The poet never wanted to see the unseen, but praying to Rama, he suddenly beheld the beloved who attunes the lover to the impersonal. Tulsi's devotion mirrors the eternal in the fleeting, and is perfumed with lowly love, sweet as budding spring and song of nightingales.

Compared to Kabir and Tulsi Das, Tagore, the venerable bhakta-bard of Bengal, is a mere bubble in the Indian ocean of faith. His father (1817-1905) was a majestic mage; the maharshi breathed new life into the Brahmo-Samaj. A wonderful lover of God was Ramakrishna. Once the saint was shown a marvelous dissertation on bhakti. His opinion being asked, the swan of holiness glanced at the treatise and replied: "A bee will buzz outside the petal of a flower. But once having entered and being overcome by the rich scent, the bee is perfectly silent. The insect forgets all about buzzing, and quietly sips the honey. Men of learning and eloquence, you also go about making a great noise in the world with your philosophies and sciences. The very moment you begin to enjoy the sweetness of bhakti, you will be silent like the bee inside the flower, being inebriate with the nectar of divine love." Ramakrishna lived in Bengal 1836-86; his latest biographer, Rolland, has also written a life of Vivekananda (1863-1902).



## XVII. HISTORIC SETTING

Polytheism is the parent of pantheism and philosophy. As the sons of Narayana trekked from Iran to India, they invoked father sky to be their traveling guide and guardian (pathikrit). When they occupied the Punjab, the militant clans turned to Indra, and sacrificed to the triumphant dragon-slayer. In the epical era, Krishna and Rama received divine homage in the populous plains of the Ganges; dread Siva became the doughty rival of the two deified heroes in the lonely Himalays. Siva's mountain cult, both sinister and sublime, retains much of the old atharva spells and enchantments, and became a potent under-current of Hinduism. The religion of the Rig Veda survived in the Midlands rather than Highlands. The Midlands, comprising the Delhi district and its immediate north, were the centre of brahminic reasoning and ritualism, but rank heresy raged among the seething masses of the Outer Circle, that is, the western Punjab, Rajputan and Behar. Leaders of thought in the Outer Circle, many of them of noble lineage, were critical and cultured, and stirred up opposition to the domineering clergy. Tradition alludes to a Punjab king who was so well versed in questions of divinity that he easily solved the difficulties of five Midland theologians. Two other distinguished aristocrats from the Outer Circle are mentioned

in the Upanishads. The superior wisdom of the one silenced the weighty arguments of learned priests all of whom hailed from the Five Midland Boroughs. The other declined to join in an elaborate sacrificial service held by learned brahmins; an international communist's refusal to salute the national colors would be considered as grave an offence now in Berlin or Rome as that revolutionary act of omission was then.

No less independent and fearless than Midland modernists were the proud Sivaists who resented to be humbled. They preferred to control nature's finer forces, and command the minds of men. How different are bhaktas! Bhakti-yoga has also drawn power and inspiration from the Atharva Veda, but never allowed itself to be diverted from self-realization to the dark and hidden bypaths or bhairava magic and mystery. Sweet bhakti, subtle sankhya and bold adwaita ; all three sprung up in the freer atmosphere of the Outer Circle. Midland culture brahminized non-dualism, but felt utterly repelled by the two other heresies. Bhaktas are averse to adwaita, because monism unifies all things, and tends to estrange adorers from the adorable bhagavat. The originators of sankhya were practical reformers, and protested against the unprofitable idealism of adwaita. They scorned the monistic dream that all things are spooky and unreal, and that brahma should be the only actuality amid crowds of illusive phenomena. Is not the backbone of every well-ordered society the busy worker? they would ask ; and surely to him the profuse

display of life is actual enough! More tender was their attitude to bhakti; the organizers of sankhya felt their utter insufficiency without the humanizing touch of the artistic vision.

The essence of bhakti-yoga was poured in the sankhya cup; self-realization by means of psycho-analysis was to disentangle the matter-clogged soul from nature's snares! In the earlier portions of the Great Epic, Krishna figures as a bhakta, and worships the adorable sungod. Under his invisible leadership the bhakti movement grew powerful. Midland monists were deft diplomats, as ecclesiastical dignitaries always are. They graciously admitted bhaktas whose quantity was no longer negligible to the fold of the faithful. Bhagavat-Krishna was officially declared to be an incarnation of the sungod to whom the lower classes in the Midlands still sacrificed even as their Vedic forebears. Old legends were dug up of brahmins who had been wonderful bhaktas, and of bhakta-kings who had turned priestly ascetics. A passage was inserted in Manu's ancient code on national law and custom, to the effect that even venerable brahmins might advantageously consult bhaktas on disputed points of theology. The oldest version of the Bhagavad Gita reflects the treaty of peace, signed between brahmins and bhaktas. The original Gita was drafted in the second century B. C., and is modeled on sankhya-yoga; Krishna is identified with the Vedic sungod. A recast proclaims him as an avatar or incarnation of the sungod. Some portions, still more recent, were

written in the first and second centuries of our era. They are no longer theistic, but teach non-dualism ; the personal Krishna is lost in cosmic infinitude.

Sankhya-yoga likewise received an orthodox label in the politic Midlands, but the new psychology only appealed to a few philosophically trained minds. Sankhya-yoga was too fine for the coarse taste of the crude multitude of believers. Was it not the same with Neo-Platonism? Its sublime tenets were delicately spun in the more robust texture of workaday Christianity. Long before the Word was made flesh, Plato proclaimed the Logos. Similarly, sankhya-yoga handed over to Buddhism the articles of faith in karma and nirvana : causation of rebirth by desire, and cessation by non-attachment. Neither Krishna nor Buddha belonged to the Midlands; both were extensive land-owners and feudal lords in the Outer Circle. Their supporters were half-civilized hordes in the wild north country. The Saka Lion, like the ancient shahs, had royal Scythian, perhaps Tatar blood coursing in his blue veins.

Buddhist Science and Neo-Vedanta were organized on a vast and imposing scale, the one by Aswaghosha, and the other by Vivekananda. Both re-staged mankind's chequered past in their artist-minds, living the deepest historic thrills and agonies over again. Their violin-souls, attuned to the feminine moods of the cosmos, played and predicted the destinies of the race, and thus helped to mold the future. In the Aryan west, Goethe's mighty organ-soul was a sonorous

mouthpiece of world-culture, past and present. The grand German supernationalist probed every doubt and difficulty by the test of self-search; God had placed his universal soul in the centre of the universe.

Son âme aux mille voix que le dieu qu'il adore  
Mit au centre de tout comme un écho sonore.

(Victor Hugo)

And thousand-voiced Vivekananda re-echoed the whole orchestration of Vedic wisdom, raising thereon a world-fellowship of faiths, with prospects of international collaboration. But universal fraternization, being overruled by the war-breeding epidemic of heavily armed nationalism, is not strong enough to break down the barriers of race-pride, bigotry and ill-will. Vedanta missions are scattered over the English-speaking world, and will stimulate current thought, as long as they preserve Vivekananda's spirit of fire, and are not weighed down by the letter of the printed word. He ever forged ahead, and stormed Olympus, defying smriti, and defeating the sluggish impulses of self-satisfied burgherdom, the overrated backbone of conservative Anglo-Saxonism which, with all its faults, is still the security and envy of an unstable world. The organizations, carried on in Vivekananda's name, must not be content to rest on the master's laurels, to cherish his pregnant and priceless message as though it were a classical tongue, perfected for all times. What was revolutionary yesterday, is common property

today, and will ever have to be readjusted to changing conditions. This is a sacred obligation to the trustees of Vedanta which is a cultural dynamo and a world-moving force. Goethe and Vivekananda were led by the "vision splendid," as their light bark of genius, cut adrift from the moorings of the past, set out, mid tempestuous gales, on the turbulent sea of meanness and mediocrity. The two titans were ever buffeted, but never deterred or defeated by the adverse currents of a hostile world. They fought for truth like heroes, but, after their passing, "sat" was again swallowed by the high waves of error. At present Aryan ideology is spineless, a peel without the orange, an empty word, a war-whoop, an imitation gem. Adwaita has become a toy and technical hobby of the learned; a new revivalist will come, maybe next century from Red Russia.

## XVIII. OUR DEBT TO INDIA

One eternal energy manipulates myriads of mortal forms. Bondage is the law of life, but through social service and comradeship man wins liberty. Aryan India regards human relationships as a tie, and harmony as a burden-lightener. Long ago, the Midlands and the Outer Circle exploded the popular fiction of individual freedom. Not even presidents or premiers, emperors or dictators, are free; their decisions and deeds are conditioned by precedent decrees, and the present determines the future. It is not chance and accident, but stern causality which shapes the course of events. Frail butterfly freaks tyrannize over the wayward and wantons; the resigned will, the life in God, alone is free. Breath and existence are a slave's pittance, but love is sacramental; the daily sacrifice redeems from bondage. Mortals who know this law are immortal, and participate in divine sonship. Being independent of the creature, they lean on the creator who is manifest in creative genius.

Great is our cultural indebtedness to beauty-loving Greece, but our inner life is under deeper obligation to spiritual India. Western civilization is artificial, complex, self-seeking; amid unparalleled technical achievements, we are in a desperate plight. ~~The~~ inner man is crushed; the outer asserts himself. Applied science has to meet the multiplying demands of a

growing population. But human progress ultimately rests on pure science (gnana). Disintegrating society pursues follies (maya), without sensing reality (sat) behind the veil of vanity. Organized religion fails; faith wanes. Churches have lost the healing touch which cleanses innate pride and baseness. Should land-hunger and greed of gold launch another world war, many gospels, despite solemn declarations to the contrary, will again join in the pagan madness of legalized slaughter. Ethical collapse has almost destroyed doctrinal authority. Physical science makes gigantic strides; rationalists have every reason to mock at static Christianity. Whenever modern research conflicts with the Biblical letter, the fundamentalists flare up in defense of time-hallowed, but untenable doctrines. Creeds are not dynamic enough to retard the rapid decline of the tottering west. Neither could Vedic tenets avert the break-down of India. Rajas and nizams, or their divans responsible for government, never had an enlightened public opinion behind them. The Indian masses, at all times largely non-Aryan and illiterate, never struggled for individual or collective liberty. The sacred cause of social equality for which valiant Buddha broke a lance in the religious arena was hardly ever transferred to the field of politics and public life. In the end, alien governance and guardianship prevailed. The green-eyed monster of jealous nationalism disrupts coerced India as much as sick Europe where terrorism dictates in seed-beds of future insurrection. The foulest blot on Hinduism is



untouchability; the proud castes feel polluted by the very shadow of scavengers and sweepers. Sixty millions, one sixth of the population, are from their very birth victims of cruel varna. But poor Mother India has one priceless advantage over the capitalistic world. Quickened by atma-bodhi, she has risen to the serener heights of universal religion, and is ready for world-fraternization.

The fact that we speak English does not brand Persian and Arabic as false tongues. To western believers, Christ is the perfect pattern, the first and faultless copy of the One without a second, in whom the vast cosmic display moves according to a pre-ordained design and providential plan. This is excellent doctrine as long as we allow Parsis and Moslems the same right to revere their holy prophets as the supreme expression of the divine will. Every outlook (darsana) is tribal and parochial, sectarian and exclusive, until world-citizenship papers are taken out. Narrow nationalism breeds a herd psychology and an arrogant mood. A larger measure of universal goodwill and mutual recognition will not altogether eliminate the risk of armed conflict between the great powers, but substantially lessen suspicion, spite and slander.

Vedanta, the Vedic end (anta) and goal of human endeavor, works out politically in colonial swa-raj or home-rule, and economically in collective farming and State-controlled industry. At present a handful of Indian plutocrats wax fat at the expense of millions of

toilers. India will always remain a pariah among nations, as long as dwija and harijan growl at each other. Co-vibration of hearts means oneness of purpose, and unity breeds strength.



## AFTERWORD

In the silver trail of Goethe and Vivekananda, youth leaders all over the world, especially in the Reich and Russia, are regimenting and co-ordinating Indo-European ideals. The strait-laced Victorian age promoted social and industrial welfare from a sectarian or partisan angle. A cut-and-dried system of schooling, far from quickening the perceptions, stunted and blunted the critical faculties. Unhappy students were taught battles and sieges, or the rise and fall of administrations. They had to memorize no end of dull dates, dynastic names and ponderous acts of parliament. The professor's authority would enforce abstruse theories on poetics and dramaturgy. But poetry is a living spark, and wars are no longer dynastic, but economic. Moreover, the destiny of nations does not depend so much on trade movements as on principles and characters. In delineating these traits, historical romances often come nearer the psychological truth than the most accurate text-books. The Fortunes of Nigel paint a lurid picture of London's underworld and gangsterdom under James I, and the Leather-stocking Tales give Homeric glimpses of the winners of the west, those hardy backwoodsmen and heroic borderers of pre-revolutionary America. The new meaning laid in history expresses the morals and manners of the masses, their struggles for exten-

## II

sion of civic liberties, the onward march of the intellect, the breaking down of outworn traditions and enervating superstitions. The biology of cultural words begins to invade our colleges. One ounce of English semasiology is more profitable than tons of undigested Greek and Latin, or a smattering of French and German; a speaking knowledge of living tongues is best acquired in foreign travel. Teachers of literature must learn to sidetrack vital thoughts of the vanished past to current problems. The wisdom of the ages, from the Upanishads to Neo-Vedanta, and from Euripides to Goethe, the last great western torch-bearer, needs periodic revision and revival, lest the explosive classics become extinct craters, losing touch with the quick beat and warm pulse of life. The authors of the Bacchantes, the Symposium, the Commedia, Lear and Faust, were pathfinders and pioneers, image-breakers as well as reconstructionists. Like the vanaprasthas or forest sages of old, these fierce rebels against strong and splendid conventions paved the way to cosmic consciousness and cosmopolitan socialism. The rising generation thinks in world-terms; sympathy and sentiment are being internationalized. Sabre-rattling nationalists squash all opposition. Unless the sinister clamor of pugnacious and predatory patriots can be silenced, and the great powers can enforce an international policing body, Europe must sink in the same morass in which the civilizations of antiquity perished.

Mankind is clogged with prejudices, both acquired

### III

and inherited. Veda and Vedanta are educative, and remove the bandage of error. Vedic studies are also informative; they disclose an almost untouched field of polar research. The Arctic origin of the Veda, established by Tilak, needs a more detailed verification, in order to readjust obsolete view-points. Soviet aviators boldly re-stage the exciting scenes enacted by Narayana's doughty sons. Russian heroes, aided by scouting planes, plow the heavily iced polar sea, and make in one season the North-East passage, that ancient dream of Henry VIII. Glittering blocks, piled up for years in fantastic shapes, tower on the boundless expanse of icefields in bright sunshine under a clear sky. These fancy-forms, tinted with every color of the rainbow, look like fairy isles or crystal continents. Even expert explorers mistake the grotesque ice-masses for solid land, and record it on maps. Errors are constantly rectified; the conquerors of Arctis are linking two hemispheres, and add a new page to the story of world relations. Well-equipped expeditions, financed by the first Socialist Republic, survey Swetadwipa tracts, rich in forests and minerals. The world at large knows little of this daring polar drama and the heroic efforts to open up a new country; a vast Arctic empire is being created, but without coercion and exploitation. The Rig Veda furnishes a prehistoric scaffolding for Arctic exploration. But Rig poetry has additional merits. Vedic lyrics abound in wild romance and dainty fancies, dear and welcome to spirited youth. Buddhism liberalizes and humanizes;

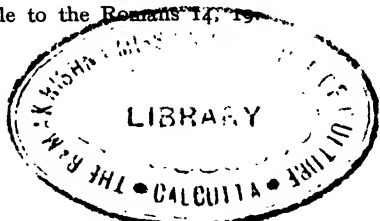
## IV

the light of Asia dispels national bigotry and sectarian narrowness. Vedanta grips pressing problems of the day, and is a superb encomium on world-fellowship, a panegyric of universal brotherhood, a ninth symphony composed in India.

Cable, radio and airplane net the mundane mechanism in an organized whole. The slogan of youth all over the modern world is universalism and world-citizenship; a broad and humane outlook on foreign affairs. No schooling is up to date without universal history and world literature. But, say the French, "*qui trop embrasse, mal étreint*"! Are the two subjects not too extensive and comprehensive to allow an adequate treatment? By no means! they are more time-saving, if only dreary and weary details be cut out. Dynamic essentials, drawn and distilled from the titans of thought, must be enthroned in the vacated place. As regards Asiatic culture, most works dealing with it are either dull and ponderous, or shallow and unreliable. The new vision, popular and yet profound, drives the needed message of "Veda and Vedanta" home to toiling workers, engaged in machine shops, department stores and wherever honest labor curtails the hours of leisure. Victor Hugo predicted a United States of the World, blending what is best in past and present thought, and pursuing the things which make for peace.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Epistle to the Romans 14: 19.



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